THE FATAL SECRET

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THE FATAL SECRET.

BY

MRS. EMMA D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

AUTHOR OF "ISHMAEL," "SELF-RAISED," "FAIR PLAY," "HOW HE WON HER," "THE CHANGED BRIDES," "THE BRIDE'S FATE," "THE LOST HEIRESS," "RETRIBUTION," "FORTUNE SEEKER," "THE DESERTED WIFE," ETC.

AND OTHER STORIES BY HER SISTER,

MRS. FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN

AUTHOR OF "THE BRIDE'S SECRET," ETC.

They said that you had faithless grown,
That gold had wiled your love from me;
But my true heart was constant still,
And thought that false you could not be;
It thought that truth and constancy
Within your bosom dwellers were;
My love no ill of you could think;
And are you then so false and fair?"

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The Fatal Secret.

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THE FATAL SECRET.

BY EMMA D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

CHAPTER I.

BETWEEN TWO LOVES.

They said that you had faithless grown,
That gold had wiled your love from me;
But my firm heart was constant still,
And thought that false you could not be;
It thought that truth and constancy
Within your bosom dwellers were;
My love no ill of you could think;
And are you then so false and fair?—NICOLL.

THE terrible events of this true story occurred some years ago, before steam-cars or telegraph wires had been invented, or cruel laws with extreme penalties for slight offences had been repealed: while yet all distant communications were made through special messengers, or slow mail-carriers, and all travelling accomplished by private conveyances, or public stage-coaches that rumbled over bad turnpike roads infested by foot-pads and mounted highwaymen; while yet gentlemen and doctors of divinity were "executed" for counterfeiting or forgery, and poor servant girls "hanged" for stealing.

It was on a beautiful afternoon towards the end of the month of May, in the evil days of those good old times, when a young man and woman came face to face in one of the loveliest green lanes of England.

The young man stopped and stood his ground.

The young woman started, and would have hurried on, but that he gently detained her.

"Well met, Sophie Melville! I have been trying to see you for a week past; but you were always out when I called at the parsonage. Come now, sit down on this bank for a little while. I have something to say to you."

The speaker was a fine-looking young fellow, a fair type of the British farmer, tall, broad-shouldered, full-chested, rather bull-necked and bullet-headed, with ruddy complexion, reddish hair and beard, regular features, and a frank, open, manly countenance, lighted up by a pair of clear, kind, bright, blue eyes, that dwelt upon the face of the girl with an expression of tenderness.

He wore a homely suit of rough gray tweed and a coarse straw hat. His shoes were rugged, and his ungloved hands were large and red with toil. No one could for an instant have mistaken Joseph Grainger for a "gentleman," yet every one must have recognized in him something much better—a true man.

The girl to whom he spoke was a beauty; there could be no two opinions about that. Her form was of medium height, at once slender and well rounded, elegant in all its proportions and graceful in all its movements. Her head was small, stately, and covered with a rich growth of lustrous blue-black hair. Her features were delicately and perfectly chiselled; her eyes, of the darkest, softest gray, were fringed with long black lashes; her lips were small, plump, and ruby-like in color and clearness; her complexion was pale and clear, more delicate and beautiful in its alabaster light than any bloom could have been.

Her dress was plain, even to shabbiness, and consisted —though it was fine spring weather—of a faded and dingy brown merino suit, just relieved by neat white cuffs and

collar. She wore also a rusty black felt hat with a rather stringy black feather, well-cleaned and mended brown kid gloves, and a pair of boots, once faultless in fit, but now rather the worse for wear. Yet this shabbily-dressed beauty bore herself with pride of a mediæval princess.

She was the eldest daughter of the curate of Santon, and one of the large family of girls and boys who subsisted or half subsisted on the father's miserable salary of fifty pounds a year, with the help of an occasional lodger during the fishing season, for Santon-on-Serle was noted for its trout streams.

Joseph Grainger and Sophie Melville had been playmates in childhood, and understood but unavowed lovers in youth.

On this May-day they had met by mere accident in one of the lanes leading from the village out to the parsonage, and he had seized the chance to speak to her.

"Well, I will sit down half a minute here. I really haven't time to stay longer," she said in reply to his request as she seated herself on a bank of wild thyme near the outlet of the lane.

"You never have time to see me now-a-days, Sophie! Not since your fine gentleman from London has been down here! The Honorable Algernon De Courcey, is he? The younger brother of the Earl of Allacres, eh? A pretty 'honorable,' he! And a credit to his noble family! To set himself to turn the head of a simple country girl like you!"

"Joseph! You shall not talk so of Mr. De Courcey! He is my mother's lodger and—"

"Your suitor! Nay, don't flare up, Sophie! I mean no offence; though it is rather hard to have a fine gentleman like he is, come between a plain man and his sweetheart: for if I mean no harm, lass, it is just as certain that *he*

means no good. But I did not come here to accuse a man behind his back, my dear. I would much rather tell him to his face what I think of him, and have it out then and there in a stand-up fight."

"A stand-up fight?" repeated the girl, scornfully, "how can you be so *low* in your ideas, Joseph Grainger? Mr. De Courcey is a gentleman!"

"Gentleman! But I'll keep my temper! Sophie, dear Sophie; we have been companions and friends all our lives. Surely that gives me some right to counsel you, some claim to your attention."

"I don't know what claim, Mr. Joseph!"

"Sophie, although no promise to that effect has ever passed between us, yet I always felt that we were bound together in mutual love, and that I, at least, was bound to you in honor as well. Why, Sophie, I have never felt at liberty to pay such attentions to another girl as you have received from this Mr. De Courcey."

"I am sure you might have done so if you had pleased," said the girl, with a toss of her stately little head.

"I did not please. I had no more inclination than liberty to do so."

"Really, Mr. Joseph, you talk as if we were already engaged," exclaimed the beauty, curling her lip.

"Among true-hearted people a mutual understanding, though unspoken, constitutes a most sacred engagement. But, Sophie dearest, I come to you this afternoon with the sanction of your father, to ratify our engagement in words. My dear, you have known me all your life, from the time when you, a babe of three years old, used to ride on the shoulders of me, a lad of twelve. You know I have loved you with true affection from that time to this, and until that fellow—whose neck I shall break some of these days if the hangman don't save me the trouble—came down

here, I was sure of your affection in return. Nor do I doubt it much now. He has only dazzled your fancy, not won your heart, my dear; but there! I will test that in another minute, Sophie. When I spoke to your father an hour ago, I only talked of my farm of forty acres well stocked, of my substantial stone farm-house well furnished, and my income of four hundred a year. And these were satisfactory. But to *you*, Sophie, I speak of the life-long love between us, and for that cause I beg you to end all doubt and suspense and to be my wife."

"I can end all doubt and suspense, Mr. Joe; but I cannot be your wife," answered the girl, not without emotion.

"In the name of Heaven, Sophie, do you mean this?"

"Yes, I do, most earnestly."

"But why? Oh, why?"

"Because you were too long about asking me, Mr. Joe. You felt too sure of me. You took too much time, and now you are too late."

"Too late! What do you mean?"

"I am not bound to tell you, Mr. Joe. Good-morning."

With that the girl arose and walked off.

Joseph Grainger started up with the impulse to follow and detain her; then he checked himself, saying:

"No; I will not lay hand on her. But that fellow! It is he! And I will break every bone in his body."

Meanwhile Sophie Melville walked rapidly down the green lane to the lower end, where stood the curate's pretty parsonage, covered with trailing vines and overshadowed by trees.

She entered the gate and passed through the yard, opened the house-door and hurried up to her room, where she threw herself into a chair and burst into tears, sobbing:

"Poor Joe! poor faithful heart! It seems cruel to disappoint and grieve him so; but I cannot help it! I cannot! I am not fit for a farmer's wife, nor for a country life! I want more of change, variety, excitement!"

Her soliloquy was interrupted by a rap at the door, and the voice of one of her little sisters saying:

"Sophie, papa wants you to come right down to his study."

The girl hastily wiped her eyes and went down.

The Reverend Allan Melville sat in his shabby little den, dignified with the name of study, in a well-worn leathern chair, and beside a table covered with a faded green baize cloth, and furnished with a few well-thumbed books.

He was a small, thin man, with a long sallow face, dark eyes, and prematurely thin white hair.

He was wrapped in a thread-bare gray dressing-gown.

"Come in, my dear child, and sit down. I have something to say to you!" he began.

The girl took the chair nearest the speaker.

"Young Grainger has been here, as I suppose you know."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, he has only said what I have been expecting to hear for the last twelve months—that he wants to marry you. Now, my girl, the match is in every respect a desirable one for a young woman in your position, and if my judgment is correct, I believe it to be an acceptable one to you."

"No, sir; it is not. I do not want to marry Joe Grainger," replied Sophie, beginning to fold the ribbons of her apron.

"Oh, that is all mere girlish nonsense, you know. I am *sure* you like the young man, and he is most worthy of your regard. I am very sure you like him, unless, unless this Mr. De Courcey has supplanted him in your favor.

Sophie, I warn you to have nothing further to say to that gentleman. Certain reports have reached me, but too well founded, I fear, and not to his credit. I have indeed felt compelled this afternoon to give him a week's warning to seek other lodgings. I was wrong ever to have permitted any acquaintance to grow up between you. It must cease at once. As for young Grainger, I have no doubt you will sooner or later accept him. That is all I have to say to you, my dear."

Sophie left her father's presence trembling with a variety of emotions.

In the narrow passage outside she came face to face with Algernon De Courcey.

He was a man of splendid beauty and diabolical fascination, tall, magnificently formed, with clear cut, regular features, fair complexion, keen blue eyes, and a profusion of gold-colored hair and beard. He wore a sportsman's dress, carried his fishing-rod in his hand, and looked as if he had just come in or was just going out.

"Sophie," he whispered, in a quick and eager tone, "get your hat and come with me down to the brook."

She hesitated.

"It may be the very last time we shall ever speak together, for I am going away to-night."

"To-night!" she echoed, in an unmistakable tone of distress.

"Yes, to-night. Will you give me one last interview?"

"Yes," she hastily exclaimed, as she snatched her hat from the rack in the corner of the hall and followed him down to the trout-stream where he daily fished.

Sophie Melville had passed out of her father's house for the last time. She never returned.

That night the family missed her from the tea-table; but

felt no anxiety, for her absence at some of the cottages was not a very unusual circumstance.

But when the hour of evening prayer and retirement arrived, they became uneasy. Just as the curate was about to send messengers around to inquire for his daughter, a lad from The Red Bull Tavern came and asked for the curate. Being admitted to the study, he handed a letter to Mr. Melville, saying:

"I was gin a sixpence to keep it till night and then put it in his reverence own fingers, and there beant no answer. Good-night, and my sarvice to ye."

Pulling his forelock, he disappeared before the curate had unfolded the note.

It was a cruel note from his reckless daughter, telling him that she loved De Courcey, and, after what her father had said to her that evening, being hopeless of his consent to their marriage, she had accepted her lover's proposal and gone with him to London, where their wedding would take place. She implored her parents' forgiveness, assuring them that their pardon was all that was necessary to complete her happiness.

"Oh, follow her! follow her! prevent the marriage and bring her back!" shrieked the half-frantic mother, when she had heard the contents of the letter.

"To what good? Since she has run off with him, it is best that she should marry him. Even if the worst that we have heard of him be true, is it not better that she should *be his wife* than be called his *wanton?* Besides, she is twenty-one years old, she is of age and we could not prevent her marriage, even if it were expedient for us to attempt to do so," said the curate.

His wife covered her face with her hands, rocked her body to and fro, and uttered groan upon groan, in the anguish of her soul.

"We must hope the best," pursued the curate. "This may be a false report that has reached us. He may not be an adventurer. He may be in reality what he assumes to be—the younger brother of the Earl of Allacres. I looked in the peerage, and certainly the Earl of Allacres has half a dozen younger brothers, and one of them, whose age corresponds to this man's appearance, is called Algernon. We will wait for news, dear wife, and in the meantime we will pray for them both," said the curate, calmly, though his soul was sorely troubled within him.

That night the two babes, aged three and four, who had been used to sleep with Sophie, awoke and missed her, and wept and wailed for the lost sister.

The next morning, all the younger children who had been accustomed to be washed and dressed by Sophie, sobbed and cried for the missing sister.

That day, the faithful lover, Joseph Grainger, coming to the parsonage and hearing the news of her elopement with De Courcey, went home in deep bitterness in spirit and grieved for his lost sweetheart.

And night and morning, all day and all days, the bereaved parents mourned for their missing daughter lost by a fate far worse than death.

But always they prayed for her, and always they waited for news.

At length the news came—the most disastrous news by the most unexpected channel.

Very little did the Reverend Mr. Melville think that he should ever hear of his recreant daughter by the police reports of the London *Morning Post*. Yet this was the paragraph that met his eyes, about a fortnight after the disappearance of his child:

UTTERING COUNTERFEIT NOTES—SOPHIA MELville, the daughter of a curate at Santon-on-Serle, was yesterday morning committed to Newgate gaol, on the charge of passing counterfeit notes on the Bank of England.

The curate stared at this paragraph as if he would have stared it out of print and through the paper.

"'Sophia Melville,'" he groaned. "Then she is not even married after all! 'Charged with passing counterfeit notes?' Then that villain was all and more than we had heard of him, and she is his victim! A more innocent and complete victim never before was sacrificed to an infernal scoundrel. I must go to London immediately."

The curate called his eldest son, a discreet lad of eighteen, and to him he said:

"Your sister is in deep trouble. I am going to London. Do not let your mother see a newspaper or a visitor until my return. Do not let her know why I go. Be very careful. I trust all to you."

The son promised all the father required, and the curate left for London the same day, having given his wife only the general explanation of "business."

The first visitor that came to the cottage that afternoon was Joseph Grainger.

"Where is his reverence?" he inquired of the son.

"Gone to London on sudden business."

"Oh, he has! All right! I am going, too," said Joseph.

CHAPTER II.

A FATAL FLIGHT.

She listened to a traitor's tale.—SCOTT.

He—glad
Of her attention, gained with serpent tongue—
His fraudulent temptation thus begun.—MILTON.

BY what arts the fascinating stranger had dazzled the fancy, inflamed the imagination, and won the confidence of the simple village maiden, it would be unprofitable here to inquire.

It is enough to say, that during their interview down by the brook, he persuaded her that the best thing she could do for him, for herself, and for her poor family, would be to fly with him to London, and there change her name from simple Sophie Melville to the Honorable Mrs. De Courcey.

So sure had De Courcey felt of gaining her consent to his proposal, that he had a post-chaise already in waiting at the end of the lane.

She suffered him to put her into it and commence the first stage of their journey to London—her heart, sometimes depressed with humiliation and grief at the thought of the manner in which she had left her friends; and sometimes elated with pride and joy in the anticipation of future grandeur and prosperity for herself and for them.

They stopped at the "Red Bull," distant twelve miles from Santon, to change horses.

There, finding a farmer's boy on a mule about to return to his home near the curate's cottage, Sophie seized the chance to write and send that penitent farewell letter, whose reception by her father we have chronicled in the last chapter.

Changing horses every twelve miles, and travelling all night and the next day, they finally reached London late in the afternoon.

De Courcey procured handsome lodgings in a respectable house at the "West End," and established his betrothed in them alone, while he engaged for himself a suit of apartments in a fashionable hotel near by.

"You see, dear love," he said, in plausible explanation of this arrangement, "we have to stay over three Sundays in this parish in order to comply with the terms of the law, which requires that the bans shall be published three Sabbaths in succession before a legal marriage can be celebrated."

"Yes, I knew that, but had forgotten it and thought we might be married at once. Is there not a way by special license?" she inquired, uneasily.

"For some persons, and under some circumstances; but not for us. So, my dear girl, we must be very prudent and not see each other *too* often by day, and *never* by night, until our marriage. To-day is Saturday. To-morrow, being Sunday, I will have the first bans put up at St. Peter's, here; to-morrow week, the second bans; to-morrow fortnight, the third and last; immediately after which we may be married."

"How careful you are of my good name! Even my father would forgive and approve you if he knew all this!" said Sophie, gratefully.

De Courcey went away to his hotel that evening and called and took Sophie to church the next morning, where she, herself, heard her bans read out, and blushed as she listened.

De Courcey went away to his hotel early in the afternoon, and did not return until the next morning.

On Monday, he put in her hands a small business directory and a roll of bank-notes, saying:

"As I have taken you away from your friends without giving them the opportunity of providing you with a wedding outfit, you must permit me, in the character of your future husband, to supply all these deficiencies of which my impatience has been the cause. Take, then, this business directory as your guide, and this roll of notes, and go to the best shops and provide your dear little self with the best goods."

Sophie took the book and the money with a blush, half of shame at the thought of accepting anything from her lover until he should become her husband, and half with childish delight in having money to spend in dress.

And how soon, she reflected, she would have money and presents in abundance to send to her impoverished father and mother at home! The thought of enriching them gave her more delight than the thought of elevating herself. To become a lady, with unlimited means at her command, and to make all their fortunes! To have her father preferred to some rich living in the Earl of Allacres' gift! To purchase a commission in the army for her brother Tom! To send Sam and Will to Oxford! To have Mary and Annie up to live with her in town, to dress them in a handsome style worthy of their rare beauty, and to marry them off to gentlemen of rank and fortune! To do the same things for her younger sisters as they grew up! Oh, what a happy future to anticipate!

All these thoughts, suggested by the bank-notes she held in her hands as the first-fruits of her wealth, passed rapidly through her mind as she timidly turned them over.

"Here is more, much more than I need," she said. "Here are about one hundred pounds, and I am sure I shall not spend twenty."

"I know it, my dear love! Nor would I advise you to spend much here in London. For, immediately after our

marriage, we will proceed to Paris, where you will find everything you can desire in greater abundance and of better quality," said De Courcey.

"Then take back all these notes but two tens—that will be enough for me."

"No. I wish you to change the others for specie. Listen. We are going to the continent where notes will be of no use, and only silver and gold will pass. That is why I want to have the notes changed for specie. Now listen attentively. Every article that you buy, buy at a separate shop and change a note. In this way you will be able to change nearly all that money for gold and silver, as there is no Bank of England note of a denomination less than five pounds. You understand?"

"Oh, yes! quite," said Sophie, cheerfully.

"I will send you a cab from the next stand, and I advise you to go to Oxford and Regent street. Stop, no! We will walk to the cab-stand."

Sophie quickly prepared for her drive. He took her to the stand and placed her in a cab, then put in his head and whispered:

"Bring all your goods home with you."

"Yes," she said, with a nod and a smile, and the cab drove away.

All that morning Sophie shopped in Regent and Oxford streets, changing every note and buying every article at a separate establishment.

She returned to her lodgings, having spent only ten pounds, and bringing back ninety in gold and silver.

"Well done! We have a little fund to start with," said her lover, when on his evening visit she gave him the change.

She looked so pleased at his approbation that he continued:

"To-morrow I shall trouble you to make some pur-

chases for me in the Strand. You must do it on the same principle, so that we may get rid of all our paper and have plenty of silver and gold to take with us. You understand?"

"Oh, yes, I understand, perfectly," said Sophie, feeling very rich in the community of goods when he talked about "our" paper, and silver, and gold.

But in truth, poor Sophie, with that honest face of hers, which would have won confidence anywhere, understood nothing about the matter, or she would have known that the Honorable Algernon De Courcey could have easily got *good* "paper" changed for specie by any broker or banker; and she might have suspected that her confiding heart and honest face were being recklessly and cruelly used for the nefarious purposes of an accomplished villain.

On Tuesday, he sent her out to shop and change money in the Strand; on Wednesday, he sent her to St. Paul's Churchyard—the great locality for cheap goods; on Thursday, to Fleet street; on Friday, to High Holborn; on Saturday, to Piccadilly.

Saturday evening, counting over the money, he found that she had changed five hundred pounds, in notes of five and ten pounds each, by spending only twenty, and that she had brought back in exchange four hundred and eighty pounds in gold and silver.

"What a capital little financier you are! You have no idea what a grand speculation you have made for us!" exclaimed De Courcey, with a peculiar smile. "But now, my dear, I must say good-evening. It will not do for me to stay too late until the law gives me leave to stay with you forever," he added playfully as he arose to depart.

Just as he reached the door, he stopped and turned back as if struck by a sudden thought.

"Oh, by the way," he said, "you regard an oath religiously, do you not?"

"Certainly," she answered. "Why do you ask?"

"Because I want you to swear to me that you will never, under any circumstances, tell any one where you got those bank-notes you have changed this week, or mention my name in connection with them."

"As if it were probable any one would ever think of asking me!" she exclaimed. "But, of course, if you wish me to keep the transaction a secret, I will do so, though I don't see the use of it, and do so without taking any oath, either."

"Ah, but I wish you to take an oath to the effect that you will never betray the secret of where you procured those notes! Will you do so?"

"Of course I will, since you wish me, though I cannot for the life of me see any use in it."

"You will see, in the course of the week, my love; but, in the meantime, you must trust me."

"Of course I trust you, dearest Algernon. If I had not trusted you utterly, do you think I ever would have left home with you?"

"No, certainly not," he said, with a laugh.

Then he got the Bible and administered an oath which she took in the most solemn manner.

"That will do. Thank you, love. To-morrow I will come to take you to church. That will be the second Sunday for the bans to be published. A week from to-morrow, the third bans, and in the afternoon of the same day we will be married, and on Monday we will leave for the continent. Only one more week of waiting, dear love."

"Only one more week," she echoed, as he raised her hand to his lips and left her.

"Only one more week," she thought, when he had gone. Then she resolved that as soon as ever they should be

married, and she should have the right to ask him, she would "put her pride in her pocket" and implore him to take her down to Santon, procure her parents' forgiveness, and do something handsome for the family before leaving England.

She went to bed early to be still and think happy thoughts, and then to go to sleep and dream happy dreams.

The next morning she arose by times, breakfasted early, dressed for church, and sat down to wait for the Honorable Algernon De Courcey to come and take her thither.

The appointed hour came without bringing Mr. De Courcey.

Then Sophie grew uneasy.

"We shall be late," she said to herself.

The church-bells began to ring, rang for ten minutes, ceased ringing.

Sophie became anxious.

"I wonder what can have happened to delay him?" she asked herself.

Another ten minutes passed and she took off her bonnet and put it away with a sigh, saying:

"Now it is too late for church. Something has prevented him from coming at all. Some friend has called, or something else has occurred. He will come himself soon, or send and let me know."

But the day passed and he came not, and Sophie grew feverishly anxious, and spent a sleepless night.

In the morning she arose unrefreshed, but she said to herself:

"I am wrong to worry so and lose my sleep. Some unavoidable trifle has detained him. He will come or send to-day."

She forced herself to eat a little breakfast, although she had no appetite, and she said again and again:

"He will surely come or send to-day."

He did not come, but he sent.

About ten o'clock, the waiter rapped at her parlor-door and handed in a folded paper, saying:

"A note for you, ma'am, left by a boy at the street-door. No answer." And he disappeared.

Sophie eagerly seized the note, tore it open, and read as follows:

"My Dearest Girl:—I should have kept my church appointment with you, but I am under the darkest of clouds. I am involved in a net of false circumstantial evidence, so condemning, that if I suffer myself to be seen or known, I shall be utterly ruined. And yet I am perfectly innocent. I cannot explain myself fully on paper, but when I see you, all shall be made clear. In the meantime, trust me against all appearances. Nay, I know you will. And above all things, if you love me, and would not ruin me, keep that secret.

"*Keep that secret under all circumstances, and trust me under all appearance.*

"No harm can come to you. The authorities may try to frighten you, but they cannot hurt you. Trust *me*, and do not fear them. Destroy this note as soon as you have read it."

The paper was without date or signature, yet it was easily recognized as the Honorable Algernon De Courcey's writing.

Sophie destroyed it after she had read it, yet not until by frequent perusal she had every word engraven on her puzzled brain.

After a dozen readings she understood no more of it than she had at the first.

Another hour, however, made its fatal meaning clear.

Sophie was still puzzling her troubled head over the mysterious note, and wondering whether hours, days, or weeks would pass before she should see De Courcey and hear from his lips the explanation he promised, when the sound of heavy footsteps coming up the stairs startled her. The next moment her door was opened, without even a preliminary rap, and two Bow street officers entered the room.

"Is your name Sophie Melville?" inquired the foremost, addressing the surprised girl.

"Yes, it is," she answered. "Why do you ask me? What is the matter?"

"The matter is that you are wanted, my dear, and must come with us," answered the officer, in a not unkindly voice.

"Oh, yes! I know! Certainly! I am quite ready to go!" promptly exclaimed the girl, thinking that De Courcey had sent for her, and not knowing at sight a Bow street bailiff from a bishop.

"Well, you take it easy. So much the better. Come along, my dear," said the officer.

"Poor innocent! She don't understand what you mean!" said the landlady, who had come in behind the bailiffs. "But if you want anybody to speak for you, my dear, and bear witness for you, call on me, Josephine Rodgers, do you hear?" she added, turning to the unconscious prisoner.

"Oh, thank you, dear Mrs. Rodgers; but it is all right. I will go with these men. Don't be afraid, they mean me no harm," said poor Sophie, as she went to her chamber, followed by one of the bailiffs who kept her in sight.

In a few moments she reappeared, dressed in the new hat and mantle she had purchased in Regent street the

week before, and unsuspiciously yielded herself to the guidance of the officers, who were about to take her before the magistrate.

CHAPTER III.

THE SECRET.

She armed herself to bear.
It was a wondrous sight to see
Such high resolve and constancy,
In form so soft and fair.—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THEY put her in the cab that was waiting at the door, and drove to Bow street, Covent Garden, where they stopped.

The elder officer handed her down to the sidewalk and led her through a rude and jeering crowd of men and boys to the interior of the magistrate's office, which was half filled with constables, prisoners, and spectators.

The officer made his way through all these and led his prisoner up before the table, over against which the presiding magistrate and his assistants were seated.

"Here's the young woman, Sophia Melville, your worship," said the officer presenting her.

"Your name is Sophia Melville," said the clerk.

"Yes, sir," frankly replied the unsuspecting girl, innocent of offence and ignorant of danger.

"Humph," said the same functionary, taking up a paper from the table and referring to it as he continued to speak. "Sophia Melville, you stand charged here by Silas Thornton, Mary Redwood, John Colville, and others, with having feloniously passed on them counterfeit notes on the

Bank of England. What have you to answer to this charge?"

"I—never did it," the astonished girl was about to reply; but quickly remembering the warning she had received from De Courcey, and thinking *this* was the coming trouble to which he had referred, and believing him to be as innocent as herself, she resolved to be very cautious in her responses, and so she only answered, "I have nothing to say, sir."

The accusers were then called up, and Silas Thornton, Mary Redwood, John Colville, and others, mercers, were in turn sworn, and testified that the prisoner had changed with them divers counterfeit bank-notes, taking gold, silver, and merchandise in return.

These notes were offered in evidence and pronounced counterfeit by a clerk of the bank then present.

Again Sophie Melville was asked what she had to say to this charge.

Again she answered that she had nothing to say.

Then she was asked where she had procured them.

She declined to tell.

"Are you aware of the extreme danger to which you expose yourself by this obstinacy, young woman?" sternly inquired the magistrate.

Sophie did not reply; she thought within herself how De Courcey had already warned her that the authorities would try to frighten her into betraying his secret, but that they could not harm her.

"Give up your accomplices, and it will be all the better for you."

"I have no accomplices. Nor will I ever give any one up," rather inconsistently replied the girl.

Nor could either threats or persuasions prevail on her to make any other reply.

The magistrate made out a warrant to commit her to Newgate, and then said, impatiently, as he handed it to the officer:

"Take her away at once."

"Come, you must come away now," said the latter.

"I am very glad to get away, I am sure," murmured the simple girl, who understood little of what was passing around her.

They led her out and put her into the cab, which was immediately driven off.

"I shall be thankful to get home to Mrs. Rodgers' again, for that was a dreadful place; but they could not frighten much out of me," she said to herself as they proceeded.

Presently they drew up before the iron gates of a huge, dark, gloomy edifice with many grated windows.

"What place is this?" she inquired. "Why have you stopped here?"

"Why, didn't you know? It's Newgate."

"Newgate!" she exclaimed, turning pale, for she had heard of it, and it was a name of horror. "Why have you stopped at Newgate?"

"Why, *don't* you know? I never saw any one so simple! His worship has committed you to gaol here to wait your trial for passing counterfeit money."

"To Newgate!" she gasped, and fainted at his feet.

In this condition she was carried into the warden's office, and from thence, when certain forms had been observed, she was conveyed to her cell in the women's ward.

When she recovered her consciousness she was lying on a rude pallet in a stone den, with a female turnkey of stern visage standing over her.

She did not quite recover her senses, but woke in a dazed state of horror, in which but one thing was distinctly recognized—that she must keep *his* secret through fire and water, if necessary.

"Oh! to what a cruel ordeal, to what a fiery trial he has subjected me! But I will be firm! I will keep his secret; for *I* am innocent and can have nothing to fear. And I know that *he* is guiltless, and only appearances are against him."

She had not at that moment a friend in the world to sustain her; she had abandoned her family for the sake of her lover, and she had been abandoned by him for his own sake. Yet alone, friendless, in prison, under a shameful charge, and in deadly peril of her life, she resolved to keep the fatal secret, and she did keep it, through the brief but terrible days of her imprisonment.

In those "good old times" no accused person remained long in prison. They were tried, condemned, and executed in a frightfully short space.

The day of her trial was very fast approaching, yet she had never thought of counsel, nor had any one thought of it for her.

About a week before her expected arraignment at the Old Bailey, the female turnkey, who was the only creature that ever spoke to her, said:

"You're to go before the court next week, aren't you?"

"I don't know. Am I? I wonder what they will do with me if they say I am guilty?"

The woman did not answer. Heartless hag, as her business compelled her to be, she had not the cruelty to tell this poor girl, "They will hang you out there in the street before the prison walls."

No, she could not say that, so she remained silent.

"Will they send me to Botany Bay?" (another horrible place she had heard of as a terror to evil-doers.)

"Oh, no, child! They won't send you to Botany Bay," said the woman, glad of a chance to speak so.

"Oh, well, that is a comfort! Do you know, I was

almost afraid they would? But one gets so many fea shut up in a place like this," she answered, with a faint, sick smile. Then with a quick and utter loss of self-control, she burst into tears and sobbed aloud, wailing forth:

"Oh, my father! Oh, my mother! Thank heaven, you know nothing of this!"

Even while this scene was going on in the cell, a gray-haired man waited with the crowd at the visitors' gate for the hour to come when they would be admitted to see their friends.

This man was bowed with age, grief and fatigue. His garments were old, rusty, and travel-stained. He leaned heavily on the handle of a cotton umbrella and sighed and moaned from time to time, or murmured a faltering prayer.

He was Allan Melville, the aged curate of Santon and the father of the imprisoned girl.

While he stood there, feeling unutterably desolate and wretched in that strange and miserable crowd, he felt his shoulder touched, and, at the same time, a kindly voice saying:

"Mr. Melville, sir! I thought I should find you here, if I missed you everywhere else in this big town."

"Joseph Grainger!" exclaimed the old man, turning slowly around.

"Yes, Mr. Melville. Did you think you would not find me at your side in this trouble?"

"After her treatment of you, too!" groaned the curate.

"Soon as ever I read it in the *Morning Post*," continued Grainger, ignoring the interruption, "I went down to your house, for I said to myself you would be sure to be going up to London to see after your daughter, and I would go along to take care of you. But when I reached the cottage, sir, you had gone. That was on Tuesday."

"I took the London mail that passed through Santon that day," said the curate.

"Yes, so I supposed at the time. And as the coach had gone, I started on horseback. I should 'a' been here before you, sir, only I lost an hour or two stopping till the bank was open to draw out my funds. However, I rode day and night and changed horses all along the road, and should have got here by daylight this morning, but for another interruption, that came near ending my journey and my life at the same moment."

"Ah! Highwaymen!" exclaimed the curate.

"Yes; two of them, masked, mounted, and armed, met and tried to stop me on Black Heath, a few miles out of London."

"Ay, a notoriously dangerous locality I have heard."

"But the gentlemen of the road got the wrong pig by the ear that time! I was armed to the teeth myself. Not to boast, I shot the first assailant dead on the spot, and wounded the other as he was riding away, so severely, that he fell from his horse. I alighted from mine, and picked him up, succeeded in giving the alarm and having him lodged in gaol."

"That was a narrow escape, and a good deed of yours."

"Yes, but it detained me; however, thank Heaven, I *did* get off safe and punished those rascals. By the way, do you know, parson, it runs in my head, uncommon, how I have seen that last fellow I hurt—the one that's in prog now—somewheres else? There was a something in his face that reminded me of somebody else, though for the life of me I can't tell who it was! But, then, the fellow's face was so begrimed and covered up with black hair and beard, that the devil—begging your reverence's pardon—couldn't have told what he was made of," continued Grainger.

The curate's attention had fallen away from his com-

panion, and become absorbed again in thoughts of his unhappy daughter.

The farmer brought him up suddenly by exclaiming:

"Well! I came up here for a practical purpose. Sympathy and friendship as hasn't a body in it, isn't good for much. I took my gold out o' the bank, and brought it up here to hire the biggest wig of a lawyer-fellow to defend our Sophie; for, mind you, we both know she's innocent, and we'll get her off—"

"You—you!" exclaimed the father, in deep emotion, "you whom she deserted? You do this for her?"

"Bless you, curate, what is love more than selfishness if it only gives good for good? But there! They are opening the gates."

"Will you come in with me?"

"Oh, no, I would not intrude at such a time. I only came here as the most likely place to find you, and I will wait here until you come back, and then we will go and find the biggest big-wig in all London town."

The curate followed the crowd into the prison-yard, where many of their friends awaited them.

Knowing that he should not find his shrinking girl there, he sought out a turnkey, who took him to the governor's office, where he obtained leave to visit his child in her cell.

Conducted by the same turnkey through many stone corridors he reached, at length, the women's ward, and his daughter's cell.

The turnkey opened the door and bade him go in.

The curate bowed his venerable gray head to enter the low and grated door, which immediately clanged to, behind him.

Sophie, clothed in the brown merino dress she had worn at home, sat upon the side of her narrow cot-bed, with

her hands dropped helplessly beside her, her pallid face raised, her dim, dazed eyes fixed on vacancy.

At the sound of the opening door, she lowered those glazed orbs until they rested on the face of her father. Then, with a piercing shriek, she covered her face with her hands.

The curate sat down beside her and gathered her to his bosom, without a word. Then she broke into heavy sobs, and sobbed herself into faintness on his bosom.

Soon he stooped and kissed her and wiped the tears from her eyes.

"Oh, I'm so sorry, so sorry you knew," were the first words she panted forth. "And my mother! Oh, my poor mother!"

"She does not know, she will never know, if love can guard her from the knowledge," murmured the curate.

"Father, dear," she murmured, "your goodness almost breaks my heart. It would kill me quite but for one thing: I am not as guilty as I seem."

"I have known my child all her little life, therefore I know *that*," said the old man.

"I am guilty enough, in leaving you, dear father! But that is all! I never lived one day with—you know who. I lived with a respectable lady—Mrs. Rodgers, Russell Square; you can inquire about her; and my marriage bans were published in the parish church there, you can see. I should have been married, only I was arrested and thrown into prison, for what I did not do."

"Where is the fellow?"

"I do not know, indeed."

"What! hasn't he been to see you in your trouble?"

"No; he is in worse trouble himself somewhere, though I do not know where, or what it is. He wrote to me and told me so; but said he would explain all to my satisfaction when he could see me. That was a few hours before

I was arrested," said Sophie, speaking a little incoherently, as might be expected, from the confused state of her mind.

"Humph! My daughter, where did you get those counterfeit bank notes?"

"Father, dear, I cannot tell you. I swore on the Bible never to tell!"

"Who made you swear?" demanded the curate, striving to keep down his bursting wrath against the destroyer of his most innocent child.

"Father, love, I swore on the Bible not to tell that either. But I was not *made* to do it: I was only *asked* to do it."

"Of course I know it was that—" The curate checked himself before he had uttered some very bad but extremely appropriate language, and then said:

"Now, look here, my dearest child, that oath does not bind you in the least degree, under the circumstances. You got those notes from that adventurer who wiled you from your home, not because he loved you, and wished to make you his wife, or even his mistress, but because he wished to make you, with your innocent face, the agent, the unconscious agent, for changing his counterfeit notes into gold and silver. Having done this, and bound you by an oath not to betray him, he has gone off and left you to your fate!—And what a fate, great God!—Now, Sophie, you must tell the whole truth. It is clear enough to me, without that; but it will not save you, unless you, yourself, tell it, to your counsel and to other proper persons," pleaded the curate.

But here the father was met by a tearful firmness that he had not expected to find in his gentle child. She believed her lover to be true, to be involved in a net of false appearances, that would destroy him if she did not keep his secret. She had resolved to keep it under all circum-

stances, "through fire and water," and "unto death." This resolution, in her lonely self-communings, had became a monomania, and when that happens all hope of changing it is over.

Her father wept and prayed and exhorted in vain. He brought the chaplain to talk to her—in vain.

He stayed with her until the hour of closing came, and then embraced her, and, weeping, left her.

He found Joseph Grainger waiting for him at the gate, and they went together in search of counsel. If they could not procure "the biggest big-wig in London town," they managed to retain a very capable man in Leonard Briscoe, of the Inner Temple.

Having given him such a brief of the case as the curate could compile, they left him, and went to get lodgings at "The Brindled Cow," a small but decent inn, in the neighborhood of Newgate.

The next morning the curate met the counsel by appointment, and took him to Sophie Melville's cell.

There both father and counsel used their utmost efforts to prevail on the infatuated girl to give up the name of him who had made her his unconscious and innocent accomplice—but in vain!

The counsel explained to her the great peril in which she was placed, and assured her, that if she were willing to give evidence, there could be no doubt that she would be accepted as King's witness, and so be entirely cleared from punishment and even from censure—but in vain.

"If the King wants a foresworn traitor for his witness, he must go elsewhere, not come to me! for I am not one, and will not be one, no! not to save my life! not even to save the gray hairs of my father from going down 'in sorrow to the grave,'" she faltered, with white lips and brow as firm as marble.

What could be done with a girl like this?

CHAPTER IV.

HOW THE SECRET WAS KEPT.

Now, men of doom, work forth your will,
For I can suffer and be still.
And come he slow, or come he fast,
It is but death that comes at last.—SCOTT.

THE day of trial came. Sophie Melville was arraigned at the bar of the Old Bailey, on the charge of passing counterfeit Bank of England notes.

Her gray-haired father attended her to the court. Her counsel, who had become deeply interested in this girl, so innocent yet so erring, so stubborn yet so heroic, had prepared the best line of defence he could possibly make.

Yet the case against her was too strong—the counterfeit bank notes, passed in more than a dozen different neighborhoods, to more than fifty different individuals, were traced directly back to Sophie Melville's possession, but could be traced no further, because she could not be induced to tell where she had procured them.

Thus, in spite of her respectable birth, her most innocent and guileless appearance and the able defence of her counsel, Sophie Melville was convicted, and the penalty was death.

I must remind you how rapidly the law took its course in the evil days of those good old times.

Sophie Melville was convicted on Wednesday, and sentenced to be hanged on the following Monday, between the hours of seven and ten A. M., in the street, before Newgate.

On receiving this sentence she fell swooning into the arms of her broken-hearted father, who was suffered by the pitying officers to bear her in those old arms back to her prison cell, guarded on each side by two bailiffs, and attended by her counsel.

When she opened her eyes again after her brief unconsciousness, she was lying on her prison pallet, with this group standing around her.

"Do not tell my poor mother. Never let my little sisters know," were the first words whispered between her bloodless lips.

"Do not despair. Even now, if you will make a full revelation, the case shall be brought before the home secretary in a manner that shall insure your pardon," said Counsellor Briscoe.

She shook her head with woeful firmness.

"I am not giving false hopes," said Mr. Briscoe to the broken-hearted father. "If she will do this, she shall be saved."

"I cannot recant," she whispered, huskily; "I cannot recant. Father, your child is not made of the stuff that constitutes traitors."

"No; but of the fine clay that makes martyrs," sighed the counsel.

"The only difference is, that other martyrs have died for their constancy to God, while she will die for the sake of a devil whom she has set up as an idol to worship!" groaned the father.

The two remained with her until the hour for closing, and then took a sorrowful leave.

"If she cannot be moved to make the revelation, we must get up a petition for pardon without it. The time is short, but we must only be the busier," said Mr. Briscoe.

They found Joseph Grainger waiting on the sidewalk for his old friend. Joseph had, from the rarest feelings of delicacy, kept out of the sight of his fickle and unhappy love, while he was spending time and money in her service, and without her knowledge.

Now he drew the old man's arm within his own, and led him away to their lodgings.

In the next few days a petition was drawn up, and signed by many people, even strangers who had only seen the unhappy girl in court, or had only read of her in the papers.

The petition was presented to the home secretary by the gray-haired curate on his knees.

That high official dignitary bade the suppliant rise, and told him that the document should receive consideration.

And this was the consideration it received: On Saturday morning it was returned with the information that the law must take its course!

The commercial safety of the great British empire, as represented to be imperilled by the utterance of a few paltry counterfeit bank notes, was of infinitely higher importance, it seemed, than the life of a silly girl who had got herself entangled in the law like a fly in a spider's web.

But one day more remained, the Sunday before the execution, which was to take place between seven and ten on Monday morning.

The wretched father got leave to spend the whole day in the cell of his more wretched daughter, reading the Scripture to her, praying with her, but seldom talking.

She lay on her back on the prison pallet, with her faded hands, wasted to skeleton thinness even in these few days, clasped over her death-like brow.

If ever she spoke at all, it would be to whisper in a husky voice,

"Oh, father, pardon me for bringing this great grief on you."

"My child, you know I do. I love and pity you. My heart is bleeding for you—not for myself."

Or she would suddenly break forth—

"Oh, do not tell my poor, poor mother! Oh, never never let my little sisters know."

So passed the last day.

The hour of closing came; but the grief of the father at parting with his daughter was so extreme that the prison officers strained a point and permitted him to remain with her all night.

What a night it was!

The girl lay as she had lain all day, on her back on the outside of her pallet, with her hands clasped over her face; the father sitting at the foot of the bed, with his shoulders leaning against the wall—each stroke of the prison clock, as it struck hour after hour from the brief time left, cutting into the hearts of both.

Towards morning the curate, who had been struggling with himself and praying for hours, spoke to his unhappy child and said—

"Sophie, my dear, do you hear me?"

"Yes, father, love," she breathed.

"Sophie, our Saviour, hanging on the cross, forgave His murderers. Can you, my child, forgive the man who has destroyed you?"

"Yes, my father, even if he meant to do it—which I do not think—I can forgive him and all," she murmured, faintly.

"Sophie, our dear Lord, on the cross, prayed for His murderers. Can you pray for your destroyer?"

"Yes, father."

"Then, my child, fold your hands and join me in prayer for the forgiveness and the redemption of Algernon De Courcey."

And the aged Christian, who, in these dreary hours in the valley of the shadow of death, had gained a mighty victory over his own spirit, knelt by the side of his daughter's cot and prayed for their bitterest enemy—for him who, for small gains, had betrayed the childlike daughter

to death, and brought the gray hairs of the father to shame.

After their prayer was over the curate arose and sat by the side of the girl and took her hand, and a peace, not of this world, fell on them.

"You have no fears, my child?"

"None, dear father, none. And it is so good you are so old. You will come to heaven very soon, dear father."

"I will join you soon, my child."

"And Joseph, good Joseph, will marry my next sister, Melissa, who is better than I ever was, and he will take care of the family until the boys get places and the girls marry. But there, I must be done with the cares of this world, the time is so short now. See, the sun is rising, father," she said, pointing to the grated window, through which the first crimson beams were beginning to pierce, "and I hear them stirring in the corridor. Father, I only want to say this before they come for me: Give my dear love to Joseph Grainger. Tell him that death has unsealed my eyes, and looking back, I see and know his worth."

They were interrupted by the entrance of the female turnkey, who brought the prisoner's breakfast.

Sophie divided the bowl of coffee with her father, but that was all that either of them could take.

It was now full daylight.

Soon the chaplain of the prison and the counsel of the prisoner came to the cell to see her. Both were surprised at the calmness of the father and daughter in the immediate presence of separation and shameful death.

It is true that her face was deathly pale, her eyes were dim and glazed with the horrors she had passed through, her cheeks were ashen hued, and her lips blue with past agony; but she was quiet and resigned.

"My child wishes to receive her last communion here

in her cell, and from my hands. Can she be permitted to do so? And will you help me?" inquired the curate of the chaplain.

"Certainly, willingly," responded the latter.

"Will you join us, sir?" asked the curate of the counsel.

Mr. Briscoe gravely bowed his head in return.

The "fair linen cloth," the bread and wine, and the books were brought and arranged upon the table.

The solemn and pathetic communion service was read, and the elements consecrated by the two ministers.

Sophie received the sacrament from the hands of her father and the prison chaplain.

When the service was concluded, the chaplain and the counsel took an affecting leave of Sophie and her father, and left the cell—the chaplain to join her again on the scaffold.

When they were left alone, the father and daughter had nothing to do but to wait. It was now half past eight o'clock. Within another hour she would be led out to die. By ten o'clock all would be over.

"Have you any fears now, my child?" tenderly inquired the curate.

"None, dear father, none—except a little shrinking of the flesh from physical torture," she said, with an irrepressible shudder and a sudden paling of her face.

"There will be none of that, my lamb. You will not suffer. It will be so sudden," replied the curate, compelling his trembling voice to be steady.

They sat on the side of the bed with their hands clasped together, until they heard the sound of many footsteps walking noisily down the corridor, and approaching the cell.

"They are coming for me! They are coming! Oh,

Jesus! Saviour! Support me in this last agony!" cried Sophie, her pallid face suddenly blanching to the hue of death.

"Ay! Call on Him! Lean on Him! He will surely sustain you, my child!" said the curate, taking and clasping her hand.

The next moment the door opened and the procession entered and filled the narrow space of the cell.

First came the sheriff, holding an open parchment in his hand.

"That is the death-warrant! Oh, Saviour, support me!" prayed Sophie in her heart, as she clung to her father.

Following the sheriff came the governor of Newgate, the chaplain of the prison, several other officers, and behind them all, Joseph Grainger.

But nobody noticed the latter.

"Has the time come?" inquired the curate, in faltering tones, as he pressed his daughter's form to his bosom.

"No, reverend sir! If you mean the time for the execution, it has not come. The execution is stayed!" said the chaplain, speaking for all. "I am here to congratulate you. The sheriff brings an order for the prisoner's discharge."

"Discharge!" echoed the father, in incredulous amazement.

"Discharge!" faltered Sophie, in a tremulous maze between despair and hope.

"Discharge!" repeated the chaplain. "The ways of Providence are wondrous strange! This injured girl could not be brought to make the revelation that would have saved her. But the wretch who made her his unconscious accomplice, and got her neck into the noose which he had earned for himself, has made a death-bed confession under circumstances that shall be explained hereafter. It is

enough now to say that the sheriff will presently tell you that you are at liberty to take your daughter home."

"A glass of wine, for Heaven's sake!" exclaimed Joseph Grainger, coming to the front, for he had seen Sophie sink heavily upon her father's bosom, not swooning, but on the point of doing so.

The sacramental wine was at hand. The chaplain poured some into a glass and placed it at her lips.

She drank a little, thankfully, and was revived.

They crowded around her.

* * * * * * * *

An hour later Sophie Melville was lying upon a comfortable lounge in the private parlor of a family hotel. She was still very pale, but her features had lost their stony stillness and her eyes their dim glaze. Fair, thin and quiet she looked like one thankfully recovering from illness and appreciating the renewal of life.

Near her sat her old father, reclining in a large easy-chair; and her childhood's companion, sitting on an ordinary one.

The latter was saying:

"Yes! And you may remember, parson, how I told you that highwayman's face reminded me of some one I had seen, but couldn't place, don't you?"

"I do," said the curate.

"As how should I, indeed, when it was stained up with walnut-juice or something, and disguised with a black wig, black eyebrows, and a false black beard?—he being fair, with light hair, you know."

"Yes."

"Well, I did not know who he was, till I was sent for to his bedside yesterday, when I recognized Mr. Algernon De Courcey, who was known to the Bow street officers as Flashy Dick, Charley Cheek, or Cheeky Charley,

Prince Cutpurse, and so forth. He was dying, and he had made his confession in the presence of a magistrate, who took it down from his lips, and several witnesses, who signed it. So he had not sent for me to hear that, but to tell me, in my ear, on the faith of a dying man, that Sophie Melville was as pure a maiden as ever lived on the face of the earth—as if any one required *his* testimony to that! Well, it was fortunate I was there to hurry up those slow country constables, else that confession would not have been in the hands of the home secretary in time."

The curate shuddered.

"However, we knocked my lord up after he had retired; told him it was a matter of life and death, and I must say he did bestir himself when he learned what the matter was. We were in time."

"When the bitterness of death had almost passed," said the curate.

"Not for me! Had she not been saved, the bitterness of death would have lasted all my life," replied Joseph Grainger, with emotion.

* * * * * * * *

One year after this, Sophie Melville, recovered from her ill-placed fancy, for love it never was, and from all the evil effects that followed it, became the happy wife of Joseph Grainger.

The young farmer sold his house and land, furniture and stock, for a sum of money that enabled him to emigrate to Australia, taking all his wife's family with him.

There in time he became a wealthy sheep farmer, and his father-in-law a bishop. His brothers entered business and flourished, and his sisters married well. And in the words of the immortal Rip Van Winkle, "they all lived long and prospered."

ARCHIE'S LOVE.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

IN the sitting-room of a neat little cottage, out in the suburbs of W——, sat a gentle, delicate-looking woman, waiting the coming of her son. The table was set for two with a dainty, tempting supper. The room, although inexpensively furnished, with the exception of a piano and a few fine pictures bore the unmistakable mark of culture and refinement.

"Archie is late to-night," his mother said.

Just then the click of the gate latch, and directly after, slow, heavy steps, told of his coming.

"Something has worried him. When he comes thus I know his heart is as heavy as his step," she said.

When, a moment after, he entered the room, his pale face and compressed lips confirmed her fears. As he came forward to kiss her, she asked, anxiously:

"Are you sick, my son?"

"I am suffering no bodily pain, mother; neither have I fever; so don't worry your dear heart. This terrible weather and the hard times cannot fail to make one feel dull—or blue, as you ladies say," Archie answere with a sickly attempt at a smile.

The loving mother's heart was not quieted, yet she would not seek to force her son's confidence. She felt that he would give it to her ere long.

The supper was removed almost untasted.

Archie went to the book-case and took from it a volume that he had been reading the night before. Drawing near the fire his arm-chair, he sat down. For nearly an hour he remained with the book before him, but his mother noticed that not one page had been turned. At length he threw down the book, started up, and approached the door, saying:

"I think I will go to my room now, mother."

"So early, dear? And are we not to have our music?"

"Music! Oh, mother, I feel as if I could never sing, never care for music again," Archie answered.

He stood still, holding the door partly open. A moment more, and he resumed his seat.

Taking from his pocket a newspaper, he opened it and handed it to his mother, pointing to the following notice:

"MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE.—It is confidently asserted by the friends of both parties that the Hon. Mr. Belleford will soon lead to the altar the beautiful and accomplished daughter of our popular fellow-citizen, Wm. Arrington, Esq."

Archie's eyes were turned from his mother's face, or he would have seen that it flushed painfully for an instant. And then growing pale and calm again, she said, with a scarcely perceptible quiver in her voice:

"Well, Archie?" inquiringly.

"*Well*, mother! Oh, no, no, 'tis not well. All the ills of life could not be as this is to me." And with a despairing gesture, Archie threw his arms across the table, and dropped his head upon them.

"Archie, my boy, do you know this lady? Can it be—"

"Yes, yes, mother, that I love her, more than my own life!"

"Oh, my son! My heart aches for you, Archie! Would

that I could speak some word of comfort for you!" the gentle mother said, softly caressing the bowed head.

"Thanks, dear mother, that you do not chide. I thought perchance that you would; and ask how dared I to aspire to win the hand of a millionnaire's daughter? I, a poor book-keeper, with a salary of a thousand a year. Yes, to *dare!* That is the word her friends would use if they knew of it," Archie said, bitterly.

"Tell me all about it, dear?"

"Yes, yes. It will be a relief, I think. And almost a comfort to speak of her—to call her name! Well, I met her first, and knew her before father's death—at dancing school. I was her partner oftener than any other boy. I think she liked to have me. The night of the May ball, do you not remember I led her from her throne to dance with me, the first? Oh, how proud I was that night! I loved her then. I thought not of her father's wealth. I only knew how lovely she was. How gentle and kind. How charming in every way. Oh, I thought not to win her heart. I simply yielded mine entirely to her. I took no thought of the future. I only lived in the blessed present. But if I had given a thought to the future, then its prospects were not so dark, then I might have hoped, and thought of working to win her. When the dancing days were over, my little queen went away to school. I saw her no more for three years. She came into our store, nearly a year ago, when I saw her for the first time a grown young lady. I cannot tell you of my joy when I saw her enter. Yet, then and there, I remembered who she was, and what I was. Bending over my book I remained until I heard her voice. Extending her hand, she spoke to me in the old sweet way. I seemed in a happy dream. I cannot tell what she said. I only know her voice and eyes were filled with sympathy when she spoke of father's death. She gave me her card, and said I must call."

"New Year's was near. I knew I could go then—one among her five hundred friends—and so I did. That was my first and last visit to the rich man's daughter. But every morning since then, I have passed her home. And every morning I have seen her. I could not do without that morsel of happiness. I believe she felt how dark and dreary my day would be unless she threw that ray of sunshine upon it. And so for her smile and bow I have gone. But that is over now. I must go no more."

Again the young head was bowed, and the mother's fingers softly smoothed the bright, waving hair, as she asked:

"And the announcement—had you no intimation of this gentleman being a favored suitor?"

"No, oh, no. I knew, of course, some one would win her. But I never dreamed so soon. She is so young. And he is quite old enough to be her father. I never feared him. I have seen him with her. He is a noble-looking man. But his is not the manner of a lover. Ah, mother, he may love her, but 'tis not love like mine. I wonder if she has ever told him of me?"

"Of you, Archie?"

"Aye, mother; for, with God's help, I saved her for him."

In answer to the puzzled expression in his mother's eyes, he said:

"I will tell you. You remember reading of Miss Arrington's narrow escape, last spring, when her horse took fright and ran off? That afternoon, mother, I was acting as porter, giving James an opportunity to attend his sister's wedding. I was not busy, and was really glad of a chance to get a few miles out of town. It was a lovely afternoon, and I felt happier than for a long time, meeting several friends. I was amused by their surprised look at seeing

me on the wagon seat. I was more, that afternoon, like the merry-hearted youth of years gone by. And, mother, my mind was filled with thoughts of her, my queen. I felt that I should see her. I had driven out on —— road about a mile, when the clatter of hoofs behind caused me to turn. Great Heaven! I recognized Miss Arrington on the terrified animal. Madly the creature came flying along. I saw she had lost control of him. On and on they came. Almost frantic myself with the thought of her danger, I dropped my reins, stood up, and stretched out my arms. I would snatch her from the saddle. I must and will save her. That was the only thought that entered my brain. She must have understood my motion and have divined the intention. As the horse came dashing by, she disengaged her foot from the stirrup, and leant forward toward me. Another instant, and I had her safely clasped to my heart—an instant only.

"'Thank God, my darling, you are safe!' burst from my lips, as I placed her on the seat beside me.

"Pale, trembling, and almost fainting, she did not seek to disengage herself from my arm, which still supported her.

"We were only a few yards from a pleasant little cottage, with a vine-covered porch. I thought of the embarrassing position, should her friend who was accompanying her come up. I said:

"'Miss Arrington, there is a shaded little nook. I will help you to a seat, if you please.'

"Then, for the first time, she seemed conscious of my encircling arm, and, disengaging herself, she answered:

"'Yes, do, I am very weak.'

"I had scarcely placed her on the porch, when a youth, her cousin, came up to us.

"Assuring him of her safety, she sent him back to the city for a carriage.

"When I was about leaving her, she said:

"'If your time is not limited, Mr. Carlyle, I wish you would remain with me until my cousin returns.'

"I knew she detained me to speak her thanks, which I had seen trembling on her lips and filling her eyes. Yet she spoke not until after I had explained my novel position, and spoke of the joy it had given me. Then she said, with quivering lips and eyes filled with tears:

"'You have saved my life, Archie.' And holding out her hand, added in a voice low and full of regret, I thought —'and I can never, never repay you!'

"I caught her hand, pressed it to my lips, dropped it and hurried away. I dared not trust myself an instant more. The next morning, as usual, I received her sweet smile and bow."

"Oh, Archie, my son, she was not indifferent to you, I truly believe."

"Yes, mother, I believe I might have won, had I been in a position to woo her. She knows I love her—she heard me cry as I caught her to my heart.

"The next day her father came to see me. Warmly he expressed his thanks, and spoke of his great obligation. I saw he wished to prove his sincerity by something more than words, so I said:

"'Mr. Arrington, I have, and shall continue to thank Heaven, for granting me the opportunity to serve Miss Arrington. Believe me, sir, the only obligation due is mine to God.'

"Grasping my hand, he said:

"'Will you promise me, if in the future you may need a friend, you will come to me?'

"I promised with thanks, and he went his way. But, mother, he never invited me to his home. Ah! I think he read my heart aright, and thought it prudent not to.

Now I have told you all, mother, and saddened your dear heart too. Kiss me good-night, and try not to worry about me."

As the door closed after her son, Mrs. Carlyle caught up the paper and read again the announcement of Miss Arrington's betrothal. Again the sweet face flushed deeply as she said:

"Yes, yes! I am *sure* it must be he!" And then her face grew pale again and troubled, as she murmured: "How strange! He does not dream that from the same bitter cup the father passed to him, the son is drinking now. Ah, 'tis hard to say 'Thy will be done,' oft times in life. Poor son! Poor mother!"

Ivy Arrington sat waiting her lover's coming. She was a fragile little beauty. A shade of sadness was on her fair face, as she toyed with a magnificent solitaire that sparkled on her first finger. A sigh escaped her lips. The jeweled hand was thrown across the arm of the chair, and she said:

"Why—why did I yield? Why allow this ring to be placed on my finger, when I had no heart to give? Oh, what joy would fill my heart, if in the place of this I wore a less costly ring! One to me of more value than all the jewels in the world, were it the pledge of his love!"

Opening a little casket near by, she took from under a silken cushion a picture. It was Archie Carlyle's likeness.

Her beautiful eyes filled with tears, as she gazed on this noble face, and said:

"You love me, I know! In one glance of your eye, I have seen more love than from all the looks of months from my— Oh, I cannot utter that word! Yes, and in your voice sounded such depth of feeling, as he knows not. Oh, Archie, I heard your words, as you clasped me

safe to your arms! He may love me, but 'tis not love like thine! Fate placed me in your arms! Would that you could have held me there! I should have been stronger—I should have been true to my own heart! I should have waited for your coming, Archie! You would have come, I know, sometime. But now, oh, my love, you never, never can come!"

She sank back in her chair, and no longer resisted; the tears fell on Archie Carlyle's pictured face. She had been so absorbed in her sorrow, she heard not the coming footstep, nor was conscious of another's presence, until a hand was placed under her chin, and her face gently raised to meet Mr. Belleford's.

"And so my little girl is very unhappy!" he said, still holding her face, and looking down into her eyes, kindly, but a little sadly, as he continued: "I have thought of this, and feared it might come. And this is my rival!"

Taking Archie's picture, he asked:

"Have you accepted this from him since—since you knew my feelings, Ivy?"

"Oh, no, no. Not from him ever. From a friend, while at school. Her brother was his friend—his room-mate at college," Ivy answered.

Taking the picture, she was about returning it to the casket, when Mr. Belleford said:

"Nay, do not hide it away. I want to look longer at it by-and-by. Now come, my child, and give me your confidence. Open your heart freely to me, Ivy. There should be no concealments between us. I have been intending to tell you something of my past. Will you give up the opera to-night, Ivy, and let us have a quiet evening here, you telling me all about my rival, and I in return telling you of the sorrow of my youth?"

Ivy expressed her willingness to remain, and Mr. Belle-

ford gently drew her to a sofa, seated himself beside her, and taking her hand, he said:

"Ivy, pardon me, dear child, for asking, and tell me truly, why did you accept me as your future husband?"

The blushes on her sweet face deepened; she hesitated, and then said:

"Because papa loved you so, and was so anxious to give me to you. I had not the strength or will to resist him. And then everybody thinks so highly of you, and so many of my young friends seemed to envy me the possession of your—your—"

"My *love*, dear," Mr. Belleford softly said.

"And I—I thought papa never, *never* would even *listen* to the other lover. I had no hope, and so I began to think I should find happiness in making papa happy. And I tried to forget him"—pointing to Archie's picture.

"But, Ivy, you have grown to love me a little, surely?" Mr. Belleford said.

"Oh, yes, indeed, almost as well as papa; better than either of my uncles."

With a smile of infinite tenderness Mr. Belleford said:

"Yes, but not as you love another. Well, your heart is true to nature, dear Ivy. I am old enough to be your father—twenty-five years older than you, my child."

When Mr. Belleford had won from Ivy the whole story of her love, he said:

"He is a noble fellow, Ivy, and worthy of you, I am sure. But trust *me*, Ivy, I will *prove* how well *I* love you, and I will try to make you happy, little one."

"Oh, I know you will. I never doubted you, only myself," Ivy said, quickly.

"You have not told me his name yet, Ivy."

"No, I did not think I need—that you would care to know it. *Must* I?" she said, low, her eyes and voice full of submission.

"I must know my rival's name, dear," Mr. Belleford returned.

"Archibald Carlyle," she whispered low.

"His likeness! Let me see it!" Mr. Belleford said, quickly.

He took it from her, approached nearer the gaslight, and stood earnestly gazing on the youth's picture.

There was great agitation plainly visible on Mr. Belleford's usually calm face, as he turned again towards Ivy. For several moments he remained as if in deep thought, his eyes shaded by his hand.

Ivy's gentle heart was troubled. Putting her hand softly into his, she said:

"I did not mean to hurt you. Forgive me."

There was love enough in his eyes then, as he turned them to hers, and said:

"Bless you, my little Ivy! Say, rather, you are a dear, good girl, and I must keep you for my own."

There was a strange light in his eyes that puzzled Ivy.

"How long since this youth's father passed from earth?" Mr. Belleford asked.

"Over two years."

"Poor boy! I can feel for him. Ivy, twenty-two years ago, I drained the same bitter cup that he is sipping now. I, too, loved with all my soul a lovely girl. We had pledged our hearts. I was poor then. But the future promised brightly. My love would wait my coming, I believed, and I was strong and could work to win a home for her. And so off to a new country I went. Every day brought me her loving, encouraging letters.

"At last, one day, came one that well nigh crushed the life from me. She was then on the eve of marriage. Oh, it was a pitiful, heart-breaking letter. She yielded to her dying father's entreaties, and wedded his friend. My heart ached for her. I never felt that she was false to me. I

prayed for her happiness. I knew the man who had won her. I felt sure he would devote his life to making her happy. And so, after a while, a calm gathered over my troubled spirit. I never have heard of her—"

The door opened, and Mr. Arrington's entrance left the sentence unfinished.

Mr. Belleford soon arose to leave, saying that Ivy looked tired, and must retire. As he bade good-night, he whispered:

"Be in the library to-morrow evening at eight o'clock."

Archie's sorrow weighed heavily on his mother's heart, deepening the shade of sadness on her face.

Although near forty years old, she was very lovely and very youthful-looking still. 'Tis true, her brown eyes had lost their brightness, and the laughing light had gone out suddenly, long years ago, but leaving in them a softened beauty.

Archie was very proud of his mother, declaring that she was more beautiful than most of the girls he knew.

The day after Archie had opened his heart to her, she sat in her little room. The sewing had fallen from her hands, when her thoughts wandered far back into the past. She neither heard the bell nor the opening of the sitting-room door. The servant's words:

"A gentleman to see you, ma'am," aroused her.

"Allan!" she cried, starting forward with extended arms—only a step, and then pale and trembling, she stood, and would have fallen, but Allan Belleford's arm was supporting her.

"Why, Alice, are you not glad to see me?" he asked.

"Oh, yes—but—"

"But never mind that. Years ago I went away to make a fortune for my promised bride. Well, I have done it. Alice, are you ready to come home to me? Speak, love. I 've come for you at last."

Ah, little Ivy, there is love enough in Mr. Belleford's eyes and voice, too, now.

He had gathered the still trembling woman closer to himself. With an effort to move off, she said:

"But, Miss Arrington. You forget—"

"I forget everything but my love for you, Alice. Never mind about Miss Arrington. She will have a younger and better loved husband. There is one thing I do not forget, and that is, that I have to look out for the happiness of a great big boy of mine. Archie, my son, I mean. He will win his love. Am I to win mine, Alice?"

"If I can make you happy," she whispered.

"God bless you, Alice!" Allan Belleford earnestly said, pressing his lips to hers.

"Here comes our son now. I took the liberty of sending for him in your name."

A moment more and with an anxious look in his eyes, Archie entered. Instantly recognizing Mr. Belleford, a frown gathered quickly on his brow. With a cold bow, he was acknowledging his mother's introduction, when his hand was clasped, an arm thrown fondly over his shoulder, and Mr. Belleford said, with joy breaking out all over his face:

"Come! come! clear away that frown, Archie, or I shall think you are not willing to accept me as your father, my boy."

"Sir!" exclaimed the bewildered Archie. And then, in a lower, softer tone, he said: "Miss Arrington?"

"I hope to claim her as my daughter some day. There! there! ease your heart, my boy, and try to win your love. Your mother is the only one whose heart and hand I claim."

It was all so strange that Archie could scarce realize the truth. But after a little while he and Mr. Belleford went out together, and all was soon explained—the past, with

its clouds of sorrow; the plans for a future of brightness and joy.

Eight o'clock found Ivy waiting in the library.

The door opened, and turning to greet her lover, she saw Archie Carlyle!

"Am I welcome? Mr. Belleford sent me to you!" Archie said, coming forward.

"Welcome? Oh, yes!" Ivy said; and then, when her hands were clasped in Archie's, she asked, her face alternately flushing and growing pale, "Where is Mr. Belleford? Oh, I do not understand. No, I ought not to be glad. I—I am his promised wife!"

"Here I am, my darling girl. Here to give you back your promise. But hold you still, as my dear child; to be won by some one you can learn to love in a different way from the love you give to me. There, I am going to talk to your father. I will make all right with him. God bless you, my children."

I am not going to play eavesdropper in this love scene, so shall leave with Mr. Belleford. First, because Archie is a young hand at love-making, and maybe an awkward one; and more particularly because I'm *very* much afraid Ivy did a share of the love-making herself. Mr. Belleford, true to his word, did make all right. Archie felt sure of this when, near the close of the evening, Mr. Arrington came in and shook hands cordially with him.

There was a quiet little wedding, a few weeks after, and the fashionable world were surprised beyond expression when it became known that Mr. Belleford had wedded one unknown to them.

Archie is studying law; in two years he will graduate. Mr. Arrington has no fears about his future son-in-law. Indeed, he feels quite sure he is on the high road to fame as well as fortune.

THE LOST JEWEL.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

By the world!
I think my love be honest, and think she is not;
I think that thou art just, and think thou art not.
I'll have some proof.—SHAKSPEARE.

"YOUR adopted daughter is very handsome, Ellen. My quiet, demure little Annie will be scarcely seen; indeed, quite eclipsed by the brilliant Lucia."

"Yes, Lucia *is* handsome; but—" and Mrs. Davenport hesitated. A sigh escaped her lips, and an anxious expression settled on her face, as she answered her friend's inquiry:

"What is it that troubles you, Ellen?"

"I will tell you. I ought to; and I feel sure you will lend me your assistance. And with dear, good little Annie's example, my Lucia may be won from that love of ornament which causes me so much uneasiness. Indeed, it was from this hope that I accepted your invitation for Lucia to spend the winter with you."

"Annie's example *may* do her good. I hope so; she is so very different. Although she is only my adopted child, as Lucia is yours, I love her very dearly, and have a thought that some day she will be nearer to me. I know of no one I would so willingly welcome as my son's wife. I do not know what I should do without her little helping hands. Although there is no necessity for it, she must

always be busy about something. And about dress, her ideas are so very modest. She dislikes so much to attract attention. I have often to scold her, to have her appear in a style which her position really demands. You know she has quite a fortune, independent of mine," said Mrs. Wilton.

"Yes, I've heard so. Well, you will have your heart and hand both full this season, in controlling and directing these girls, so entirely opposite to each other."

"They may do each other good. Annie ought to gain a little appreciation of worldly good. And indeed I wish she did care a little more about dress. Point lace and diamonds afford her no more gratification than plain white linen, or simple jet or gold ornaments."

"And poor Lucia would almost sell her heart for diamonds. Indeed, I believe the man who can give her the most of them will win her hand, if her heart should ache forever after!"

A few days after the above conversation, Mrs. Davenport returned to her home, leaving Lucia with her friend Mrs. Wilton.

Notwithstanding Lucia's failings were known to her hostess, she became very much attached to the orphan girl, who was so beautiful, bright, winning, and generally pleasant and entertaining. All, for a time, yielded to her.

Mrs. Wilton thought her quite an acquisition to her little home circle, and indispensable at the receptions and parties of the season.

George Wilton loved his mother's favorite, the gentle little Annie, and he had told her so many times. Still there was no positive engagement between them. When Lucia first came to visit Mrs. Wilton, George did not seem very much taken with either her handsome face or easy, cordial manner.

"She was excessively vain, and too fond of admiration;" so he said to Annie.

But after a while he grew more tolerant of Lucia's faults; a little longer, and he lingered to listen to her merry voice, then sought her side, and finally Annie's quiet, artless little ways no longer won him, even for an hour, from the brilliant girl's presence.

Annie's heart ached bitterly, but bravely she hid it, even from Mrs. Wilton, her dearest friend.

As the weeks of her residence with her friends wore on, Lucia's restraint gradually passed away, and many times her ruling passion broke forth in a most glaring and disfiguring light.

On one occasion, after returning from a large party, she entered her room, and, unmindful even of the presence of Mrs. Wilton, she tore off her muslin dress, and throwing it down, stamped upon it; and in a perfect fury of envy and disappointment, she raged until exhausted, because she could not dress in diamonds and satin, like a new star that had just appeared in the fashionable firmament, and, of course, quite eclipsed Lucia that evening.

Sorely grieved, Mrs. Wilton tried to soothe and calm the excited girl, but with little effect.

George's infatuation was unmistakable. Lucia was daily gaining a greater influence over him, and his mother dreaded the result. Yet how could she open his eyes to the unworthiness of the object of his preference?

About that time cards were issued for a very brilliant reception; Mrs. Wilton and her family receiving theirs. Immediately the question arose, "What shall we wear?" Lucia declined, and she could not and would not go unless she had a new and handsome dress.

Gentle Annie sought to try and soothe her, by delaying her arrangements until Lucia could make them too, and remained with her.

After a short absence, Mrs. Wilton returned with an anxious look; and after hastening up to her room, she came down again and said:

"I went out, intending to bring you both home a present, but I have met with quite a loss—a hundred dollars. I hoped it might have gotten out of my pocket-book somehow before I left my room, but I've looked in vain!"

Both girls started up, and exclaimed:

"Let us go hunt for you;" and, "Where can you remember having it last?"

But all hunting was of no avail. The money was gone.

Three days before the evening of the reception Lucia received a letter from home. And with great apparent satisfaction she asked Annie to go with her to get her dress and trimmings.

Although there were many more elegantly dressed women present that gala night, none looked more beautiful than Lucia, in a rose-colored silk, covered with puffings of tulle, the neck and sleeves trimmed with point lace.

Mrs. Wilton did not conceal her surprise at the beautiful dress, which, with its trimming, she knew must have cost a sum much more than she had supposed Mrs. Davenport could afford to give her.

"Well, Lucia, you are contented to-night, I trust. You were admired sufficiently, and there was not a more beautiful dress in the room. Nothing was wanting," said Annie.

"Yes, something was. I had no jewels. Let me don yours for a moment, Mrs. Wilton, and see how I will look when I have diamonds of my own," said Lucia.

Mrs. Wilton was just removing her wrappings. Throwing off the opera hood, she unhooked one ear-ring, and handed it to Lucia; then putting her fingers to her other ear she exclaimed:

"See! I have pulled the other out. It has caught in the tassel or fringe of my hood. I had it when I came upstairs, I know. Look quick, girls! Be careful not to tread on it."

Both girls commenced to look over the wrappings. The hood was turned in and out; every inch examined carefully. But it could not be found.

George was called and joined in the hunt, through the halls, up and down the stairs.

"It may be on the pavement. But it will not be wise to take a light out to hunt to-night. I will get up with the first ray of light and look," said George.

"Look again, girls. I feel so sure it must be in among those things. I will give the one who finds it twenty-five dollars."

But the offered sum failed to bring it forth. It could not be found that night, nor the next morning.

Mrs. Wilton was closeted with her son. As if fearful that the walls had ears to hear the words, she bent her lips, and whispered into his, words that caused him to spring up and cry out:

"Oh, mother! you are unjust! How can you? Such a thought is unworthy of my mother, usually so kind and just!"

Again she whispered low into his ear, and his face grew grave, puzzled, and anxious.

"I will not let such a suspicion linger for one moment in my mind. Why should you, mother? No, no! Cast it forth!"

"I will not breathe it to any other, my son. I hope it may be as you say."

The evening of the next day the family were in the sitting-room, Lucia trifling over her work-box, when Mrs. Wilton, greatly to George's amazement, said:

"Lucia, I see you have a safe little box there. Please lock up this ear-ring. I had it showing to a friend who, seeing our advertisement of the other's loss in the paper, asked to look at this. I do not want to go up-stairs to put it away. Just keep it until I ask you for it."

Speculations relative to the missing jewel were the continual subject of conversation with the family and every calling friend.

The afternoon following the night that Mrs. Wilton had given Lucia the ear-ring to keep for her, some friends were speaking of it, and Mrs. Wilton said:

"Lucia, I will take that ear-ring now, please. George, dear, go up and ask Annie for Lucia's work-box—"

"Why, Mrs. Wilton, I gave it to you last night!" answered Lucia, quickly.

George stopped.

Mrs. Wilton said.

"My dear, you will see you have it. Just look, I cannot be mistaken. George, get the box."

"Why, surely, Mrs. Wilton, I gave it to you! We were up in your room, you and I, and—"

"Lucia, if you will look well, you will find the ear-ring that I have not got," answered Mrs. Wilton, and looking into Lucia's eyes, her own speaking more than her tongue could ever have; the words so dreadful would have faltered and died in the attempt for utterance.

Lucia gazed amazed, terrified an instant, and the bright crimson flush which had spread over her face when she first denied the possession of the jewel, gave place to a deathly paleness, and she faltered:

"Indeed I gave it to you. I—I—"

"And I will declare, to the public if necessary, you have it still in your possession. Will you get it, Lucia?"

Footsteps were heard on the stairs—George's.

With a powerful effort for composure, Lucia said, as he entered:

"I—was so frightened! I knew I had taken it out to give you. I remember now. When I retired I put it in my trunk, for more perfect safety. I will get it."

In a few moments she returned, and placed in Mrs. Wilton's hand the ear-ring.

That night, when the girls had retired, Mrs. Wilton called George into her room, and opening her jewel-box, displayed, to his amazement, both ear-rings.

With a warning movement, she hushed the cry that was about to escape his lips, and in a whisper, he asked:

"Where did you find it?"

"Where I told you."

"Oh, no, no, no!"

"Yes."

"She gave them *both* to you?" he asked, with a suppressed groan.

"She did. As you heard her say, one last night—that which you saw me give her. I asked her for it when we were alone, with no witness, you see. This afternoon you heard me demand it. I looked at her. She saw I had her completely in my power then, and brought forth the missing one, that she had taken that night when I first dropped it. It was an experiment."

"But if you had been mistaken, mother, what then?"

"She would have proved her innocence by insisting, notwithstanding my words, and more than words, my looks, that she had given it to me. And I should have seen that I was wrong."

The next day Lucia stated that she was called immediately home, and bade them "good-by" the same evening. George escorted her to the depot, and was very kind.

But there was an air of deep dejection about him, that, like his mother's looks, spoke more than words.

Mrs. Wilton informed her friends that she had found the ear-ring, it having been restored to her through the efforts of a detective.

About the missing money, nothing was ever known to prove the guilt of any one; only suspicions lurked in the minds of those who had cause to doubt the honesty of one.

George was, after a while, restored to his former position in Annie's loving and forgiving heart; and in a year after his temporary blindness—caused, he says, by too close proximity to such a *light* object—Annie became Mrs. Wilton.

Her mother no more regrets Annie's disregard of fine dress and jewels. Better so than, as it might be, of the danger into which such a passion might lead its possessor. She had a touching example.

BETWEEN TWO LOVES.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"DEAR me! I never was so puzzled in my life! Harry, *do* help me. Which do you think the prettier? Mamma cannot decide any better than I. Two days ago, she declared nothing could be more elegant than this one. Yesterday she was not so sure about deciding on my keeping it, because the exquisite fineness of the other one rendered it rather more desirable. To-day they are both so beautiful she cannot say which she admires the most. Now what shall I do? I declare I am really ashamed of myself! I am sure Mr. Goodman will think I am a very troublesome customer. I've exchanged first one for the other, I would not like to tell how many times. And now I have both here, I am just as much undecided as ever."

Mrs. Morton's usually bright face wore a sadly perplexed look as she turned her eyes appealingly on her husband.

"Oh, Nellie, love, *do* clear your brow! You look as if you had the care of a nation on your mind, instead of the purchase of a lace shawl. Now tell me the merits of each, and I will give you the benefit of my opinion."

The hall bell sounding just then caused a pause in the conversation, and a few moments after the servant entered, presenting a card.

Mrs. Morton, glancing at it, said:

"Oh, Mr. and Mrs. Nelson. I think their call quite

opportune. I shall bring them in here, and get their opinion too. They have both excellent taste."

"Yes; and in a multitude of minds we may find wisdom enough to decide the weighty matter," Harry Morton said, laughing, as his wife hastened to her friends.

A few moments after, Nellie returned with Mr. and Mrs. Nelson. After a cordial greeting, Harry entered into a humorous description of his wife's and mother-in-law's perplexity concerning the shawl.

Nellie listened quietly for some time, until Harry's account of the frequent receiving and returning of the shawl, and the imaginary conversation between Mr. Goodman and his clerks on the subject, getting a little too ludicrous for her to bear very amiably, she exclaimed, with great disgust:

"Come, Mrs. Nelson, we will go up into mamma's room, and talk with her about this matter. Harry seems determined to turn it into ridicule."

"No, no, Nellie; I humbly crave pardon. I could not help indulging in my ruling propensity, particularly when I had so good a subject. Call mamma, and then we will enter into a grave consideration," said Harry, trying to keep back his smiles.

"I know very well you are almost dying to say a *man* could decide *all* subjects, great or small, without calling in all his relatives, connections and friends to assist him!" said Nellie, with a rueful countenance, giving Harry a sly pinch.

"Well, dear, you have said it for me. I shall only add, all subjects, from the selection of a wife to the purchase of a pair of boots. But, to be sure, he may be *pinched* by his choice," answered Harry.

"Oh, indeed, Harry, you are too provoking."

"Never mind, Mrs. Morton. I'm going to tell Harry a

little story, to prove a man cannot always make a selection even of a wife without getting some friend's assistance," said Mr. Nelson.

"Why, you do not mean to say a man, or *the* man, could not tell which woman he loved the best, do you?"

"Indeed I do, Morton. Now, Mrs. Morton, if you will call your mother, I will proceed with my story."

Nellie's mother soon joined them, and Mr. Nelson began.

"My friend—we will call him Charles Barnard—had reached the age of thirty-five, and still remained unmarried. Some of his friends declared him a confirmed old bachelor, with no tender feeling for the fair sex; others, that in his youth he had loved and been disappointed. This was true in part. He was betrothed to a lovely girl, who died a few weeks previous to the time appointed for their marriage. Charley remained true to her memory for twelve years; and indeed I believe he would have continued so for life, had not accident thrown him in the way of one whose resemblance to his first love was very striking. His profession as a physician carried him to visit a clergyman, who had long been suffering from some chronic disease. Doctor Barnard could do nothing more for him than several others whose advice had been sought—only afford him temporary relief.

"However, the invalid at his first interview conceived a warm regard for the doctor, which, proving mutual, ripened into a sincere friendship. There it was Charley met the lovely girl who reminded him so much of the one he had lost. May was truly beautiful and charming in every way, but not less so was her sister Blanche, who was two years younger.

"About a year after, Doctor Barnard having visited them daily during the time, their father died, leaving his loved ones to the care of his friend.

"The little family, mother and daughters, placed the greatest confidence in, and consulted the doctor upon all business arrangements and matters of importance.

"Up to this time, whether the doctor had really decided upon marrying, I cannot tell; but rumor declared that May was his choice, and even told of a speedy union.

"A younger brother, William Barnard, coming home from a European tour about that time, was introduced by the doctor to the lovely sisters. After visiting them for several weeks, during which time he had tried in vain to determine which his brother really loved, adopting the views of Madam Rumor, he said:

"'Well, Charley, when are you going to be married?'

"'Married! Who said I was going to be married at all?' answered Charles, looking very innocent of any such design truly.

"'Who? Why, everybody,' William replied.

"'Indeed! And who to, I'd like to know?'

"'Now, Charley, I declare you are verdant if you suppose you can visit a lady for eighteen months, and folks not know it. Everybody says and expects you to marry May, of course,' William said.

"'Well, I *do* love May dearly, better than anybody in the world, except Blanche—"

"'Blanche? Charley, you love her? You will marry her?' William asked, with manifest anxiety.

"'Yes, I love Blanche. But—well, not better than May. That is, I don't think I do. Now, Will, just stop staring at me, as if you thought me *non compos mentis*, and I will tell you the truth of the matter. When I first saw May, I loved her more for another's sake than her own. Afterward her intelligence, wit, sprightliness, and general loveliness so won upon me that I was really on the point of offering her my hand and heart, when Blanche came

home from visiting her relatives. Now, Will, you know yourself you cannot tell which is the more beautiful. Well, with Blanche's blue eyes, so full of gentle, lovely light, looking into mine, I was not so certain I loved the bright, flashing, black eyes enough to lose the blue ones.'

"'Pshaw, man. I should think you were old enough to know your own mind. Besides, what are eyes, or the color of them? It is the woman, her mind and heart,' interrupted Will. impatiently.

"'Just so, Will. But don't break in again until I tell you all about it. I adore May, because she is so full of energy, enthusiasm, and noble impulses. She does me good, helps me in every way. She is just the woman for a physician's wife. Yes, I *do* think I will go; tell May I love her, and ask her to be mine,' Charley then said, jumping up, and putting his hand on his hat.

"'That's right, old fellow! I am so glad you have decided. You will be much happier, I know,' said Will, grasping his hand.

"You may have seen that Will was very much interested in the subject, and *very* anxious to secure May as a sister. You can imagine where he was drifting. But Charley did not suspect at all.

"An hour passed, during which time Will still sat in the office, his mind busy planning a happy future, which was suddenly interrupted by Charley's return.

"'What, back so soon?' exclaimed Will. 'Am I to congratulate you?'

"'Oh, no.'

"'No? Not rejected, I hope,' said Will, with an anxious face.

"'No, not so bad as that. I'll tell you. As I was nearing the house, indeed had gotten right opposite, I beheld, seated at the window, Blanche. Her face, resting on her

hand, had such a sad, sweet look—she was in deep thought—that I felt like going right to her, telling her how much I loved, and trying to cheer her sadness. The gentle, darling girl!'

"'Well, Charley, you are enough to try the patience of a saint. I've been waiting here, expecting your return with the best of all news, happy as a man can be, and instead—'

"'Never mind, Will,' said Charley.

"But Will did mind. He was more disappointed than he cared to let his brother know.

"'You see, Will, a man must not be in a hurry about such things,' continued Charley.

"'If you mean about determining which of two girls a man loves, *I* think he ought to be in a hurry,' Will said.

"'But I love *both*. I'm going to tell you how I feel now. Instead of having May, to inspire me to greater and better deeds, and nerve me to work on for the good of my fellowmen, I want, when I return home at night, wearied with hard work, to *rest*—to be loved, soothed, comforted, rested. Dear little Blanche is the one to give me this: to rest my head on her bosom, and have her caressing little fingers smoothing my brow, toying with my hair—'

"'What the thunder is the matter with you?' exclaimed Charley, suddenly, stopping and gazing at Will, who, during his brother's description of his feelings, had winced considerably. At last it grew more than he could stand, and starting up, overturning the chair, he began to pace the floor.

"'What *is* the matter, Will?"

"'The matter *will* be brain-fever, if I remain here with you. You are enough to give it to any one,' answered Will.

"'Oh! really, Will, you ought to pity my condition, sympathize with me, and not get out of temper—'

"'I'll get out of town this very afternoon, hoping when I get back again, you will have decided which you are going to ask to be your wife.'

"And true to his word, Will left, to visit some relatives in a neighboring town. Returning after an absence of ten days, and finding Charley, he asked the question, the answer to which was so important to himself.

"'Well, Charley, how is it? Have you made up your mind, and won your love?'

"'No. May has been away for a week; just returned, two days ago. Really, I felt perfectly sure Blanche was the one I loved above all in the world, and I was determined to tell her so. That very day *May* came home. I never felt until that evening how much she was to me. What a noble girl she is! I—yes, I *think*, to-night I'll settle the matter!'

"'Do so, Charley. I think myself May *is* the one for you.'

"'Yes. But—O dear!—sweet, gentle Blanche. How *can* I give her up? Oh, Will, pity, help me!'

"'I vow I will!' answered Will, starting up, catching his hat, and opening the door.

"Just then a gentleman came in in great haste, and carried Charley off. So the brothers did not meet again until the next morning, when Charley said:

"'Now, Will, what can you do to help me in my dilemma?'

"'I've settled the affair for you,' Will answered, his whole face expressing his great satisfaction.

"'Settled! How?'

"'Why, you have no longer a choice. Blanche is my promised wife,' Will said, exultantly.

"'Will, old boy, is it really so? Did you ask her? Does she love *you?* Is this the truth? You know you love

her? Charley said, looking the very picture of agreeable surprise.

"'Yes, to all questions.'

"And before Will could say another word, Charley's arms were about him, clasping him to his heart, exclaiming:

"'Oh, Will, you are the dearest, best, jolliest brother that ever lived! Hurrah! I cannot tell you how glad I am!'

"And releasing Will for a moment, he rubbed and clapped his own hands, then caught Will's, and shook them until the poor fellow cried out for mercy.

"'Happy? I'm the happiest fellow alive, Will! I know *now* it is May I've loved all the time. But, you see, I could not bear the thought of losing Blanche. Now my brother having her is the next thing to having her myself. Both of the dear girls in the family; that will be happiness, sure enough. Now, you see, when I want rest, and so on, I can come to Blanche—'

"'Yes; and she will provide you with a comfortable chair, and a pillow to rest your weary head upon; while for your tangled locks I'll endeavor to find a comb, instead of my wife's fingers,' Will replied, with a merry laugh.

"'Oh, you rascal! But I will not quarrel, you have made me so happy,' Charley exclaimed, again grasping his brother's hand.

"It is needless to add that in a few weeks there was a double wedding. And there is not a happier man living than Doctor Charley—excepting your humble story-teller—notwithstanding some one else decided for him the all-important question."

"But you have not told us how happy Will was," said Nellie.

"I think I did," Mr. Nelson said, his wife breaking in with a merry little laugh.

"No. Oh! now I believe I comprehend. Is it possible you are—"

"Just so, madam. Here, at your service, are the Blanche and Will of my story—two living witnesses of the truth thereof. Now, Morton, I think you will stop teasing your wife about her wavering between the shawls," Mr. Nelson said.

"Really, Nelson, your story needs living witnesses," said Harry. "But thanks, for its telling has decided the important question agitating Nellie's mind. Like the doctor, she cannot make up her mind to give up either; so we will keep them both in the family. And as a peace-offering, I will give one to Nellie, the other to mamma; hoping the latter will be rather more generous with the object of her admiration than the Will of your story, and permit hers to comfort Nellie, and rest on her shoulders, too."

WHY DID SHE MARRY HIM?

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"YOU want me to tell you how it was that Eleanore Fulton married as she did? Dear, dear, that child was the greatest care of my life. It was just like her to marry Carl Thurston. Well, I must tell you how she was in her childhood, and *then* you will see how it was to be. There were three of them. Florence, the oldest, a beautiful brunette, dark, dignified, and discreet. There was no fear but Flory would *always* be just what was proper and best for her. Then came Lilly—fair, frail, fond little Lilly—with her golden hair, and deep blue eyes—eyes that drew all the little boys about her in her childish days, and as many big ones when she grew to be a young lady. She was a sensitive little creature, that could not look on anything repulsive without fainting, with a perfect passion for everything beautiful. She had only such about her.

"While Eleanore—Nell, we call her—was the 'stray one,' they said—a little brownie, and to *my* eye, the beauty of the family, with nut-brown hair, and eyes the brownest and brightest ever seen, and the brownest skin, too, 'that ever a white child had,' her mamma declared. For never a bonnet or a hat would she keep on a moment longer than she could help. The rosiest cheeks and reddest lips that ever a girl had, had our Nell. 'Sparkling, spirited, *spiteful* Nell!' the boys called her. Ah! she had the keenest wit,

the sharpest tongue, and the softest heart that I ever knew.

"I remember well one day, a circumstance occurred that told plainly enough how it would be in the future with her.

"She was just six years old then, when the grandmother sent the little ones a lot of chickens.

"Each child was given permission to choose one for its own.

"Flory quickly spied a fine, large and proud-looking hen. Lilly caught up and fondled a pretty little bantam, calling it 'beauty.'

"And Nell actually chose a broken-legged, miserable, ugly one, only about half-covered with feathers.

"'Mercy, Nell, take the horrid thing away,' cried Lilly. 'Why on earth did you take it?'

"With a disdainful toss of her head, Nell moved off to meet her mother, who said:

"'My daughter, there are several beautiful chickens. Why do you not take one of them?'

"'Because I like this one best!' Nell said, decidedly.

"'Nell, come here and tell mamma why you choose this lame, ugly chicken?'

"'Because it is ugly and lame, and because I knew nobody else would have it, and I was sorry for it; and I'm just going to take care of it, and—and I know it is a good, nice chicken, if it is ugly, but it ain't. And I don't care if it is—I love it!' The bright, laughing eyes grew thoughtful, then sad; and when she had said her say, they were flashing and defiant, and she was ready to fight for her chosen one, if necessary.

"There, now, you can see for yourself, how it was to be with her.

"'Dear, dear,' said her mother, 'I'm fearful some day

you will be choosing a husband because you are sorry for him, and no other girl will have him.'

"We lived but a step from the college. But if it had been miles away, our beauties would have drawn the lads quickly enough.

"They came by the score. I would peep through the curtains sometimes to see how it was with them. Just as I thought. Flory had tall, elegant-looking ones around her. You could tell by a glance they came of a proud race.

"And Lilly was always off in a corner with some one—always only one at a time—who was sure to be the most charming fellow in the room, and who loved and read to her poetry, and never tired turning over for her the volume of engravings she loved.

"But Nell I liked to watch. She had more beaux than both the others, only she wouldn't keep them. She laughed at them, and I truly believe they were afraid of her—or rather that dreadful little tongue.

"When Flory was nineteen, she did as they hoped and expected, married a wealthy young Southerner, who placed her at the head of a magnificent establishment, where she presided with queenly grace.

"Lilly was slow in making her choice. In truth, she liked so many—I might say loved, for, as I've told you, she loved everybody and thing lovable: one for his wondrous eyes, another because his brow was more beautiful than any she ever saw. Well, there were at least six who possessed some particular attraction. However, there was one who we all thought had made up his mind to win her.

"Harry Seymour it was. He liked Nell best when he first came, but she gave him not a word of encouragement. So he took to Lilly. He was just the dearest fellow that

ever lived; handsome enough to please Lilly; frank, honest, merry-hearted; always thoughtful for the comfort of others, and with wealth enough to make him attractive without one of these better possessions.

"He was winning his way with Lilly, when some one of the young gentlemen introduced Carl Thurston. Oh, I wished he had been anywhere but in our house. Well, Nell never laughed at him. She was as gentle as a dove to him, spending hour after hour, and evening after evening, seated beside him, singing for him, reading to him.

"'Dear, dear! she will make him grow to love her. And then—what then? I dread to think of it,' her mother said, growing very much concerned.

"'Why will you do so, Nell?' I asked.

"'Because, aunty, he is blind. Nobody else will entertain him. And I am so sorry for him,' she said, tears filling her brown eyes.

"It was no use to talk about it. It would only make her feel all the more sorry.

"Well, one day there was a little party, pic-nic, or something of the kind, in the grove not far off—Harry Seymour with them, of course, and Carl, too. Nell was sitting with him when the cry arose—'Harry is shot! Harry is dying!' I don't just remember how it was; but some accident from his own gun.

"Nell started from Carl's side to fly across the green, and drop down beside the wounded man. He was perfectly sensible, although very badly hurt. A faint smile of satisfaction passed over his face when Nell, tenderly lifting his head to her lap, gave her orders for his comfort. She had then cut off the covering from the torn and bleeding arm. With her own hands she washed the wound, and continued to bathe it with cool water until the doctor came, all the time soothing him with cheering words.

When for a moment no one was near but me, she bent her head, and with her eyes full of tears, said:

"'Oh, that I could help you bear this suffering.' Lilly —where was she? Fled, with the first sight of blood. He saw her; but he knew she was not like Nell, and he minded not, for Nell was with him.

"Well, the doctor came, found the ball, dressed the wound, and pronounced it not dangerous with proper care.

"We had him with us for nearly a month; and then it was that Lilly saw Harry Seymour loved only Nell. But Lilly did not suffer. Her heart had not been deeply engaged. She had received Harry's attentions because he was persistent, and would probably in time have been won by them, if he had continued.

"Carl Thurston had grown so pale and thin during the time that Harry was with us, that we knew he was worrying himself almost to death about Nell, fearing to lose her. As Harry grew strong and well again, Nell resumed her old ways with Carl.

"They had been out to walk one afternoon, and on returning, I saw the look of perfect happiness on his face. I knew then how it was. He had told his love, and she had promised to be his. I knew not the quiet, gentle, womanly girl that came back that evening. I wanted to send her forth and have my own wilful, wayward, wild Nell.

"It was the last day of Harry's stay; I was going into the little parlor that Nell called hers, when I encountered Harry. I saw he was anxious to be by himself, and I went in to Nell. I found her weeping terribly. I coaxed her a little calmer, and then she told me all about it.

"'You see,' she said, 'I am engaged to Carl.'

"'And well you may cry, then. I wish he was in heaven!" I said, angrily.

"'No, no, I am not crying for that, but for Harry. You see, he thinks he loves me—'

"'Thinks! You *know* he does! Harry loves you truly!' I exclaimed.

"'Yes, yes; I believed him when he told me so. I never dreamed he was going to speak of it, though, when he came in here an hour ago. I can't tell you just what he said, for I was so distressed. But, oh, I know what he said when I told him I was not free.

"'Oh, Nell, I will not believe it! I have been thinking of you for four weeks as my own. I believed you cared for me. Once I despaired of winning you and tried to find happiness elsewhere. But that day I was hurt brought me more joy than pain. I hoped again! Oh, my darling, you will not wreck my life! You care for me a little, Nell, do you not?'

"And what did you say to that, you naughty child, I ask?'

"'Harry, indeed I do care for you, as dearly as if you were my own brother,' I said. 'And if—if I had not known Carl, I might—I could not say it—but he did.'

"'You might have been mine. God pity me! This is very hard to bear, Nell; to think I must yield you to him. Why—why have you done this?'

"'I told him, aunty, as I told papa and mamma last night—they know all about it—that because he loves me. If I had sent him forth I believe he would die. I will be his because my whole heart is filled with sorrow for his dreary, dark life. I know I can brighten it. I do not believe any one else could, or would, be willing to try. He is alone in the world. I taught him to love me; Heaven knows I only thought to give him a few pleasant hours during those evenings. I never dreamed of this, or—or—'

"'You would have fled from it,' I said.

"'No, no, I will not say that,' she continued. 'When Harry said I had darkened, aye, wrecked his life, I had to scold him a little. I told him *he* could always win love, that the world was filled with beauty for him, while for my poor Carl there was little love, and only me. There, aunty, that is all. He is gone. I shall see him no more —no more! Oh, what a terrible word!'

"She dropped her head in my lap, and I knew she was shedding bitter tears. A little while, and she raised the pale face and said:

"'Don't look so, aunty. *You* make me cry. I must get bright again before Carl comes. He knows when I'm sad, and it hurts him so.'

"Well, Harry went to Europe, and they were married. Her parents tried all they could to prevent it, but she was firm. He had an income of about a thousand dollars, left by his father, and they live on that. To think of my darling, that I had such bright hopes for—that I thought to see surrounded by the highest of the land—spending her life *thus!* Well, some folks find their happiness in making others happy. I suppose it is so with her. There is *one* comfort for us that *all* do not have, and that is, that all of our girls have husbands who quite idolize their wives. Lilly married Harry's brother."

"I told this story years ago to a friend, and now she insists I must write the sequel. Nell is with us, home again. Two years and more have her Carl's eyes been given sight. The beauties lost here, he has increased a hundred-fold up there.

"We have just coaxed Nell to lay aside her mourning. Last year my bachelor brother passed from earth. He gave us all a legacy, but to Nell he gave a hundred thou-

sand dollars. And there was not one of us that did not rejoice.

"Last week Harry's brother came in and told us Harry was in New York, and he said:

"'Poor fellow! he has always been unfortunate, and now every dollar he had in the world is gone.'

"I thought he gave a kind of reproachful glance at Nell.

"An hour after, our little wilful piece was down-stairs in her travelling-dress, all ready for a journey.

"'Where are you going?' we all asked, in one breath.

"'To New York,' she said; and off she went.

"Yesterday they came home—I mean Harry and his bride, our Nell.

"Although my heart was dancing with joy, I put on a great show of dignity to say:

"'Well, madam, this *is* a little out of the usual mode, I think. Off to hunt a husband! I should not wonder if, anticipating leap-year, you proposed yourself.'

"'I *might* have, aunty, if Harry had not—'

"'Caught her just while she was feeling *very* sorry for me,' Harry interrupted her by saying.

"Turning to his brother, he wrung his hand, and said;

"'Thanks, dear old fellow! That was the biggest lift you ever gave me in your life, when you got up that imaginary misfortune for me. If Nell had not thought me a poor, penniless wretch, I'm doubtful if I should ever have won her! She was awfully disappointed that it was not as you told her. And I doubt if she likes me near so well.'

"Nell flew across the room to pull her brother-in-law's ears. Again her merry laugh rang out through the open windows. The birds caught it, I truly believe, and burst forth in a song of welcome to her, our Nell—returned to us again—the same wilful, winning, charming Nell, as of yore."

LOOK UNDER THE BED.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

SOLOMON STEARNS was the clerk in the printing establishment of Storms and Sefton. The week previous to the time of our story, Solomon's mind had been very much disturbed, in fact his equanimity quite destroyed, by the gay, fashionable and thoughtless wife of Mr. Storms coming into the counting-room and saying:

"Tell Mr. Storms I have taken a little pin-money."

She swept clear the cash drawer of all the money Stearns had collected to pay off the hands next day, and went away smiling, never knowing or caring how much trouble she gave to the worthy proprietor, or any of his employés. The good-natured husband made no other remark upon this not unfrequent occurrence, than:

"Well, Stearns, we must do better next week. We shall have larger receipts, and will make it all right with the boys. Tell them so."

Solomon said, "Yes, sir," to his employer; but to himself, a few moments after, "I don't believe in letting a woman have her way all the time."

The next week Solomon vowed to be "up to her." Friday morning he had a sufficient sum to pay the men for two weeks' work. Saturday afternoon was the usual time for doing this. So Solomon would not trust the money anywhere but in his own keeping.

He returned home that evening feeling very much relieved by the thought of having fixed all right for the boys next day. With much pleasure he communicated this to his wife.

"Dear me! Solomon, if I had been you, I wouldn't have trusted myself with so much money. Supposing you'd been knocked down and robbed, what then?" said Mrs. Stearns.

"Just like you, wife; always supposing something anything but pleasant. Suppose, please, I had not secured the money for the poor boys, what then?" said Solomon.

"Why, they would have had to wait until you had. But if you had lost the money, then it would be a very different thing. You would have to make the money good. Dear, dear! it makes me shake to think of your coming along the street at night with so much in your pocket. Have you looked to see if you have it now?" asked Mrs. Stearns.

"Oh, pshaw, Nancy! I declare you are the queerest woman I ever did know. Now there is the money safe!" exclaimed Solomon, drawing the well-filled wallet from his pocket, and slamming it down on the table beside her.

"Oh, mercy! Look there, Solomon," screamed Mrs. Nancy, pointing with a terrified look toward the window.

"Look at what?" exclaimed Solomon.

"I saw a man's face at the window," she whispered.

"Nancy Stearns, if you were any other woman but my wife, I'd say, What a fool!—screeching and screaming because a man might have glanced in while passing on the street," Solomon said, in an irritated tone.

"Solomon Stearns, as you are my husband, I would like to say, What a wise man! But I am sorry I can't, particularly as you ought to be, considering your name. It's against my principles to lie. A wise man would not have displayed his pocket-book, with the window blinds open,

"But, oh, mercy, Solomon, we ought not to quarrel, when who knows but we may be murdered before to-morrow mor.ing! I wished you had not fetched that money home with you," groaned Mrs. Nancy.

"Do hush, wife, and be sensible, and we will both stop complimenting each other. Now give me my supper," said Solomon.

His wife went out and hurried in the supper. She tried to banish from her mind thoughts of danger, but it was not an easy matter. She was not naturally nervous or timid. She had been reading that day of some noted burglars being in town, and a word of warning to housekeepers. Again, a neighbor had been in to tell of a friend near by whose whole family had been chloroformed, and the house cleared of everything valuable. So *this* was the secret of Mrs. Stearns' disquietude.

The subject so annoying was, however, dropped during the supper, and indeed until some time after, when, as he was always accustomed, Solomon took down the chess-board, and said, "Come, Nancy."

Nancy came and began to play.

Frequently, "Why, Nancy, what *are* you about?" Solomon asked, until at length he exclaimed, "What on earth are you about, Nancy? What are you thinking of?"

"Solomon, did you look behind you when you came in the door to-night? Dear, dear, a man might have come in when you did."

"Nancy Stearns, a man did come in when I came, and not a child, for you to be talking so to. Now, stop it, once and for all. Don't you know thoughts are in the air? Some fellow will catch yours, and think of robbing us. The way you go on, one would think I had the great 'Koh-i-noor,'" getting really angry then.

"I don't know what or how much that is. I only know

that Mrs. Pimpton told me that there's lots of robbers around," Mrs. Stearns said, looking as if she saw one then.

"Oh, go to bed, Nancy. You are nervous."

"Indeed I won't, until you do. I am not going upstairs by myself to be murdered, all alone!" snapped Mrs. Stearns.

Solomon smiled dryly as he answered:

"Oh, well; I suppose it won't hurt so much if I suffer with you. Well, I'll go, as I have to be up very early to-morrow."

Nancy peeped behind every large chair and sofa through the rooms below, and when into her own, she turned on the gas in full blast, opened the closet doors and felt about there, pulled away the fire-board, and was peeping up the chimney, when Solomon said, sternly:

"Now stop! I don't believe in letting a woman have her way. I've said so before to-day, and now I am determined to stand to it. Besides, you'll have every mosquito a mile round coming in here. There!" turning off the gas and adding, "Now I know you'll be glad to get into bed. You'll be afraid to be stumbling about in the dark."

"Oh, dear! If you had only waited until I'd looked under the bed, I'd felt easy. Please let me light up another minute, Solomon!" pleaded Mrs. Nancy.

"No, not for a second! Nancy, if you had your usual good sense, you would know a man could not be under this bed without he crawled there and remained flat on his stomach all the time."

"That's just the reason he would get there, thinking we would never look for him in such a place. I've always looked under the bed ever since I had one," Nancy said, crying.

"Yes; looking for robbers. People generally find, some

time or other, what they are all the time hunting for. I believe you would rather find one than not!"

"Indeed I would, if there was one to find, and feel decidedly more comfortable than letting him, when he finds us asleep, find all the money and silver we have got. May I look under the bed, Solomon?"

"No. I'll have my way this time, and not yours, Mrs. Stearns. Now go to sleep."

"Indeed I can't," answered Nancy.

But she was very tired, and it was not long before her husband knew her fears were surely quieted. Then Solomon chuckled to himself, saying:

"I've seen enough of the folly of letting a woman have her way lately, and I'm going to turn over a new leaf."

And so, rejoicing in the consciousness of having done a good thing, Solomon Stearns sank to peaceful slumbers.

Now neither Mr. Stearns nor Nancy were sound sleepers, but somehow that night they *did* sleep long and sound, and not until the door bell had been pulled violently three or four times, accompanied by loud rapping, did Mrs. Nancy open her eyes. Then, instead of quickly starting up, she rubbed her eyes, yawned, stretched herself, and rubbed her eyes again. Another ring, with its accompaniment, brought her to a sitting posture, and she called:

"Solomon! Dear me, how we have overslept ourselves! There is the milk boy. Solomon, I say!"

It took considerable shaking to bring up Solomon, and then he muttered something about making him get up when he had not gotten half sleep enough.

"But don't you hear the milk boy? We have overslept ourselves dreadfully."

"I guess not, Nancy. Let's see."

The old-fashioned clock which stood on the chimney piece was consulted, and Solomon said:

"Now I did think I wound her up. But I must have forgotten it. She stopped at five minutes of twelve."

Down into his pants pocket he thrust his hand to draw forth his bunch of keys. With a look of mingled doubt and fright, he turned to his wife. She was gazing wildly at the clock.

"Ah, now, Nancy, you've been playing a trick on me!" Solomon said.

"What do you mean? But see there!" pointing to the clock, and looking wildly from that to her husband's face.

"What do *you* mean?"

"The clock ain't stopped. It's going," gasped Nancy, darting to the window and throwing open the blinds.

The sun shone in, strong and bright, casting a straight shadow across the floor.

Solomon was looking then terrified and wild enough. Nancy repeated;

"It's going, I say."

"It's *gone*, I tell you!"

"Gone! What's gone?"

"The money!"

"Oh! good mercy! I told you we'd be murdered and robbed!" Nancy exclaimed.

"Haven't you been trying me, Nancy? Oh, yes, you have. See there; you have been up before. The door is ajar. I fastened it the last thing."

"Solomon Stearns, we have been murdered and robbed! —I mean chloroformed. Pugh! don't you smell the pisen stuff? Oh, Lord! I knew it! I felt it!" groaned Nancy.

There was no longer a doubt of the truth. Both the smell of chloroform and its effect were too manifest.

"How could any one have gotten in? And where could he have hid? You looked everywhere."

"No, I didn't. I can't tell how any one got in. But I know just where they hid; where you wouldn't let me look—under the bed," answered Nancy.

And down on her hands and knees she went then, to look under the bed. An instant after, and she cried out, in a voice which sounded rather triumphant to Solomon:

"Just as I said. See here!" and she held up a pair of false whiskers.

"Look and see who is at the door ringing the bell so," said Solomon.

Nancy, looking out of the window, replied:

"It is the boy from the office."

"Throw him the keys, and say I'm not well, but will be over in an hour or so," Solomon said.

When they went down-stairs, they found all the back part of the house open. The boy had left the milk hours before. Nancy hurried up a cup of coffee, after which her husband hastened to the office, stopping by the bank, and drawing from his little savings enough to replace the lost money.

It was a severe blow to him, but from which his worthy wife could and did draw a little mite of consolation. From that time to this, she has been allowed to look up the chimneys, into closets, and even under the bed, to her heart's content; her husband having come to the conclusion, that it is just as well to let a woman have her way.

AT A FEARFUL COST.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"I DECLARE it is *too* mortifying!" exclaimed a brilliant brunette, throwing aside the morning paper with an impatient gesture.

"What is, Jennie?" asked the gentle-looking girl beside her.

"Why just to think *every lady*, with any pretensions to respectability, has given a party this season but us! I declare, I am truly ashamed to accept any invitations, as we have not returned the politeness, nor have any prospect of doing so. I don't know *what* papa is thinking about. Whenever I've spoken about it, he has given me not a bit of encouragement. And I'm just going to take the matter into my own hands. I will ask him just *once* more, and if he does not agree, I *will* have a party if—no matter *what it costs*," Jennie replied, with a determined look on her handsome face.

"Jennie, don't talk so! Have you not noticed that the lines of care on father's face have deepened much lately? I know all is not well with him. He is troubled, I see plainly, and is striving not to cast the shadow of it over his family. If he could have given you a party, you *know* he would have done so long ago. When did he ever refuse us any pleasure he could bestow? He has been *too* indulgent, I fear, and we too extravagant. I heard Mr. Barnard say,

last evening, that many of the oldest firms in our city were tottering, and the proprietors would have to be very skilful to weather the financial storm. I fear papa may be among those anxious ones. Don't worry him, Jennie, dear," pleaded the younger sister, her fair, sweet face growing sadder, as Jennie quickly answered:

"Oh, nonsense! It is nothing of the kind. Papa is growing penurious, and wants to economize. Saving money is what he is up to."

"I think he is up to more than that, Jennie. Saving his name and honor—"

"There, stop, Gertie! I don't want to listen to a sermon on that subject. I've known papa to get these spells before. I am *determined*. Mamma will not object, I know. So a party I'll have. But here is mamma now."

Mrs. Halstead, entering, inquired concerning the subject under discussion. Jennie repeated what she had said to her sister, concluding with:

"Now, mamma, don't you think we might manage to give one? I've a particular reason for wishing it just now."

"I hardly think we can, Jennie. I've noticed your father's depressed look. He is worried about something, and I would not like to ask him now."

"Mamma, might we not manage it without asking him?" Jennie asked, with such a sweet, pleading expression in her dark eyes, as she leaned her head caressingly on her mother's shoulder, and whispered:

"I should like *so* much to have Captain Lovell see *me* do the honors. He was admiring Ada Lawton's dignity and grace the other evening, when she presided at her party."

She blushed a little, and looked so lovely, her mother felt disposed to help her favorite child, yet scarcely knew how it could be done.

Jennie saw she was yielding, and said:

"Mamma, I have fifty dollars. If you had as much, we could pay Gilbert that on the supper in advance, and he would gladly wait for the balance three or six months."

"I have a hundred, that your father gave me this morning to pay several little bills. Perhaps they might be put off—that is, a part of them, those not so pressing. But you forget the music."

"O dear, yes! Twenty-five more, that must be paid at the time. Couldn't you spare *that*, mamma?"

"I must pay twelve to Bridget I owe her for last month, and here this is nearly gone. I must hold her, which I cannot do if I do not pay her. Then your father told me to be sure to give fifteen to John."

"Oh, mamma, divide the twenty-five between Bridget and John, and let us have the party. Papa need not know anything about it until it is on him, and he won't worry over what he cannot help. You'll never regret it, you darling mamma! And we won't mind what it costs," Jennie said, then in a happy mood, having succeeded in winning her mother to her will, she knew.

George Halstead sat in his counting-room, a weight of care plainly visible on his sad face. He was evidently waiting for the coming of some one. At length the door opened, and he arose to meet the visitor, saying:

"Thank you for coming, Walton. Courtesy would demand my seeking you; but you understand me. I thought you would. Here you can say things to me perhaps you would hesitate to in your own house. Six months ago you lifted the burden from my mind and heart. I told you with your relief I could stem the tide. To-day I am a ruined man. Difficulties have increased on every side. I can neither meet my liabilities to you or others, although Heaven knows how hard I have striven. In ten days at furthest the crash must come."

"Halstead, I have seen it's coming. I must be plain with you. And you would have more sympathy when this is known, had the extravagance of your family been less manifest."

A half-suppressed groan escaped the miserable man. His friend went on:

"It would be more cruel to withhold this than say it to you. You are keeping up an establishment of magnificence scarcely justifiable in a man of millions. Your wife and daughters are the most elegantly and expensively dressed women in town. Your boys—"

"Stop, stop! in mercy, stop! To one you are unjust. Gertrude—"

"Yes, I should have excepted her. I know she is a noble girl. Have you talked with her?"

"No, no; I could not bear to grieve her loving heart any sooner than necessary. Walton, I would willingly die to save them from this trouble. In truth now, at times, I fear I shall go mad. I have not sent for you to ask for any delay; it would not help me; only to make an assignment of all my effects to you, as a preferred creditor. What may be left you will do the best you can with."

"Stop a moment, Halstead. What amount would save you?"

"Not less than twenty thousand dollars."

Mr. Walton remained in deep thought several moments. Then raising his eyes to his friend's, he said:

"Halstead, that sum I will place at your command this day week, if you will promise me to make a radical reform in your household. Make your sons dependent on their own exertions. See that they obtain no credit. And make your wife and daughters understand the trouble you are in. Do this within the week, and you are saved. Take my counsel, and in less than five years you will be a free man."

"God bless you, Walton! my more than friend! I will do it. You who will save me shall counsel and guide."

"Very well; I shall be a stern master. You will find me ready, when you are. Cheer up now. Good-by. I've an engagement at six."

Mrs. Halstead and Jennie had fully decided upon the party at any rate, and when her father returned home that evening, his face wearing a more hopeful expression, Jennie whispered:

"I told you nothing was wrong with papa. See how pleasant he looks!"

"Mother, wait a while. Don' give up to Jennie's whims. You know, if father was not in some trouble, he would not have refused Jennie, when she asked him to let her have the party," said Gertie.

But her pleading was useless. Preparations went on for a grand party. Jennie triumphantly said, "Fortune has favored us," when her father told them he should have to go to B—— on business, to be absent three or four days, possibly longer.

"Let me find you all home when I return, at furthest, Thursday evening. I want to have a council of peace, I hope," he said, smiling pleasantly, when he bade them good-by.

"We will all be home," Mrs. Halstead and Jennie replied, while Gertie stole out after her father, and winding her arms around his neck, said:

"You have been looking so worried lately, father! Are you feeling better now?"

"Yes, yes, little one. It was a passing cloud. Things look brighter now. I will tell you all when I return, and shall want your help, my best child. Now run in."

Invitations were issued for Thursday night. That night George Halstead had fixed to disclose to his family his

exact circumstances. Two days after, Mr. Walton would fulfil his promise, and then all would be well.

Never did Jennie Halstead look more beautiful than when she stood, smiling, and conscious of the admiring gaze from eyes in whose sight she cared alone to triumph.

The magnificent rooms were filled to their utmost capacity. It was decidedly the party of the season.

The band was playing one of Strauss' beautiful waltzes when Jennie, supported by the arm of Captain Lovell through the dance, raised her eyes to the door. There standing—the pallor of whose face frightened her then, and haunted her ever after—was her father.

Gertie, who, resisting the combined efforts of all, refused to join the merry throng, was watching for his coming.

She drew him with her far away into an upper room, off from the company, and there, through the night, strove to calm the fevered state into which the shock had thrown him.

The next morning, when Gertie, seeing him somewhat relieved, threw herself down for a few moments' rest, a servant, never dreaming of the mischief he was doing, bore to Mr. Halstead the note which Gertie found after, and which somewhat explained the sad sequel of our story. This it was:

"FRIEND HALSTEAD—Last evening's event proves clearly you have not the firmness, possibly not the disposition, to do your duty. Why should I try to save you? You need depend no further on my assistance. Yours,

"A. WALTON."

That night, evading the loving girl, George Halstead stole from his home, never to return.

Days passed, yet he came not. At last the river cleared the terrible mystery. On its bank were cast the remains

of the miserable man—the sad result of woman's vanity, extravagance and carelessness.

The verdict, "Accidental death by drowning, when in a fit of temporary insanity," was given by the jury, and accepted by the people. But I think another verdict might be found, which would more clearly explain this case, and many others: "Driven to death by woman's folly." Men sometimes are more considerate than wise.

It was a terrible blow to the gentle, loving Gertie. Not a thought she spent on the loss of all worldly possessions—all, and only, for the dear father she grieved. But her sorrow was freed from the bitter pangs of conscience.

MINNIE GREY.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

WITH an impatient little movement, Minnie Grey turned from the glass, saying:

"What's the use? No matter what I put on, I look just the same ugly, sallow little body. Oh, Grace! why could I not have been given some little beauty? I would willingly give half the days allotted to my life to be beautiful."

The fair, sweet face of her companion was raised from the book she had been reading to Minnie's.

"Of what profit is beauty, dear? Friends call me so; and I, Minnie—I would gladly change looks for your health and strength. Why do you crave beauty?" Grace asked, with a sad look on her lovely face.

"Why?—why?—you ask. That I might be loved. Just think! Here I am over twenty-one, and never have had a lover; and I'm sure I never shall. Who is going to love me, when there are so many beautiful girls everywhere?"

"Every one that knows you—"

"But you see, Grace, dear, no young man will care to know me. You see how they all seek out pretty girls."

"No; you are mistaken, Minnie. You do not think, or you would not talk so. Think of me, dear, and thank God you are as you are. I may find love; but who would wish to unite his life with one so feeble as mine? Never

fear; some one will find out what a dear, sweet little girl you are. And you will be beautiful to him whose wife you shall be," Grace said, with a sweet, assuring smile.

"No, no; the one whose wife I shall have to be, I suppose, does not care if I am not pretty. He only cares to have somebody that can rub and fan, and read the morning papers—yes, and cook. It will not be the old man's darling with me, I know; just the reverse—the old man's slave," Minnie said, bursting into tears, and, pulling off her hat, she threw it down, sobbing:

"I'm not going out. I look just as I feel, perfectly miserable."

"Why, Minnie, darling, what *do* you mean? Is it possible there is any truth in the rumor I've heard about old Mr. Plimpton?" Grace asked, gently drawing Minnie down beside her.

"Yes, too much truth for my happiness. Oh, dear, I would run away to-morrow if I'd only somebody to run with," sobbed the poor child. "I don't want to marry Mr. Plimpton. But what can I do? Aunt insists I shall; and —well, I do not see that a home with old Mr. Plimpton could be any worse than the one I have now."

"Poor, dear little orphan Minnie! would that I had a home to offer you!" Grace said; and while Minnie was sobbing on her shoulder, the sweet girl was thinking of some plan for her friend's relief.

"I have it, dear," she said. "You shall not marry for a home; you shall go to work for one."

"What can I do? Nothing sufficiently well," Minnie began saying.

"Yes, you can teach little children. Here, let me have writing material; I will, with your permission, put an advertisement in the paper immediately. May I?"

"Yes, with many thanks, dear Grace, for your kindness. Do with me as you choose. Any change from this will be acceptable. Oh, Grace, how I have suffered in this home by charity given! I have tried to earn all I get, but aunt does not think I do. Only this morning she was insisting on my giving a favorable answer to my venerable suitor, and said she was tired of supporting me; that now I have not only a chance of doing well for myself, but for my friends, to whom I was so much indebted. As long as uncle lived I was treated with *some* show of kindness; and he was always loving."

"Well, dear, I trust you will be happier soon. Now, I shall attend to this myself, and have any answers that may come delivered to me. We shall not want your relative here to know anything about it until you are ready to leave. And now, I'm going. Keep up a brave heart, and try to get a less woe-begone look. Mothers want cheerful faces about their little ones," Grace said, kissing her friend good-by, and receiving her promise to do as she bade her.

Three days after Minnie received a little note from Grace, saying:

"Come—I've good news. Prepare yourself to make some calls."

Minnie knew she must look the best she could, and when an hour after she presented herself to Grace, the sweet girl said:

"Why, how well you look, almost as happy as I shall expect to see you after you get to work. Now see, here are four answers to our advertisement. These two I like. This one of Mrs. Laurence particularly. You must go to *her* first. I know something of her; she is kind and good, I think, and the mother of two little girls and one boy. Should you not suit her, then we will try the next."

Grace kissed, and hurried her off, saying, as the door closed after her:

"If I had let the dear child get a chance to think or say a word, she would have gotten so nervous and timid I should have had some trouble in getting her to go alone."

With a trembling heart Minnie rang the hall-bell of Mrs. Laurence's home—an elegant brown-stone house on—— avenue. Her agitation was in no way relieved when a pompous man-servant stood before her. She managed to inquire if Mrs. Laurence was in and hand the card Grace had given her.

An instant after, her fright was chased away by a lovely little girl of five years, who came dancing up to her, saying:

"I know you. You are going to teach me to sing and read and sew. Come see mamma," and catching Minnie's hand, the little one drew her along to the door of the parlor.

A sweet, smiling little woman came forward with extended hand, saying:

"You see, Miss Grey, this little girl has taken possession of you. I trust we shall like each other. I do want some one to help me with the children so much!"

Minnie was so relieved, so delighted by the pleasant, cordial greeting, that, in her own quick, impulsive manner, she answered:

"Oh, if you will let me come, I will be so glad! See my letters! Here they are. Please read them, and then you will know more about me and if I will suit you."

Quickly the little lady read the first from the kind doctor, and only glancing at the signatures of the others, she answered, smiling:

"This one would have been sufficient. I know the good

doctor, and am very glad to secure the services of one recommended by him. I will read the others by-and-by and show them to my husband. Now, Miss Grey, we will to business. I like you, and want you to come just as soon as possible, to-night, if you please. And about the remuneration?"

"I have no idea about it," Minnie said. "Let me come, and you can see about that afterward. I only want a home, with a kind word sometimes."

Minnie's lips quivered, and her voice broke completely then.

Half an hour after she had given Mrs. Laurence all her story, and the kind little lady bade her good-by, with assurances of a happy home in future.

Grace was anxiously waiting Minnie's return. The happy girl's face was an answer to the question she was about to ask.

"Ah! I see, you have been successful. Now look in that mirror and tell me if my little friend is not grown almost pretty," Grace said.

Minnie glanced as directed, and with a blush answered:

"I've been with such a sweet, beautiful lady, it would not be very wonderful if, while breathing the same atmosphere, I may have lost some of my ugliness."

By Grace's advice Minnie collected her scanty wardrobe, packed, and had it in the hands of a porter before she went down and explained to her aunt that she had found another home.

Completely surprised, not only by the news, but by Minnie's calm, decided manner, for a few moments her aunt could offer no resistance, and when she recovered herself and began to pour forth a torrent of reproaches and threats, Minnie was beyond their reach.

Very happy Minnie grew to be in her new home. The children's hearts were soon won, and Mrs. Laurence grew daily more attached to her.

"What should I do without her?" Mrs. Laurence said, speaking to her husband of Minnie. "She is so patient with the children. Emma and Rosie love her dearly, and she can do more with Willie than any one but you."

"Willie is very trying sometimes, Lottie, and I fear very much will exhaust Miss Grey's patience. Unseen by her, I watched him yesterday. And indeed, I fear, if we do not manage to curb his temper, we may lose this prize, as you seem to consider Miss Grey. Indeed, I should think she might prefer a life with old Mr. Plimpton to the charge of that little tyrant," Mr. Laurence returned.

The children were in great glee—even Willie became very docile, while visions of expectant presents "danced o'er his head"—Uncle Armand was coming home.

Little Emma, in her confiding way, told Minnie that *her* uncle was the best uncle in the world.

"We all love him *so* dearly, and you will love him too, Miss Minnie; you can't help it," she said.

"And I 'm going to tell him he must lub Minnie," baby Rosie chimed in, with her arms encircling Minnie's neck.

Uncle Armand's arrival caused the books to be laid aside. A holiday was proclaimed. Uncle Armand had begged for it, and no one ever thought of denying any request of his. Armand Leslie was Mrs. Laurence's only brother—a grave, earnest-looking man, several years older than his sister, to whom he was very much devoted.

"He is a confirmed bachelor, Minnie," Mrs. Laurence said; "but he is not queer and cranky. Years ago I thought I should have to resign him to a very beautiful girl. They were engaged, and he was happier than I ever knew him."

"Did she die?" Minnie asked, quickly, her eyes filling with tears.

"Die! No, indeed. She ran off with a man old enough to be her father—almost her grandfather. She threw away love for gold. Armand has had no faith in woman since."

"Oh, how could she—how *could* she have deserted him? What is gold compared to love? I'd die for one who loved me!" Minnie exclaimed, clasping her little hands and raising her eyes to meet those of—Armand Leslie!

He stood on the portico, looking at her through the open window. How much of their conversation he had heard she knew not, but was sure her last remark had reached his ears.

Drooping eyelids and crimson cheeks told how much the artless girl was embarrassed and mortified to know that the cry of her eager, hungry heart had reached a stranger's ear.

When Minnie found a chance, she stole away to her own room, resolving to keep as much as possible out of Mr. Leslie's sight.

"What must he think of me, I wonder?" she said.

What he thought he was, just at that moment, saying to his sister.

"What a devoted little love she would be!"

"Yes, indeed. But I'm just selfish enough to hope no one will find out what a dear, sweet, patient little girl she is, so that we may keep her. Wouldn't she make just the nicest little old maid imaginable?" Mrs. Laurence said.

"No, I think she would make the dearest little wife imaginable!" Armand answered, with a look in his fine eyes that his sister did not understand.

Although Minnie made up her mind to keep out of Mr. Leslie's way, that gentleman seemed determined she should not. Almost every day he would present himself in the

school-room; sometimes with the plea of helping Willie through his task; again, because Rosie would not come without him; once, to beg them all off for a frolic in the woods, in which Minnie was forced to join. And so it was until, with no longer an excuse, he came to read an hour or write a letter, or, oftener, to sit and "watch the children," he said.

Those were pleasant days for Minnie. Happiness was in her heart, beaming forth from her soft brown eyes, and making the little plain face grow really pretty. Grace saw the change in her friend, listened to the low, love-tuned voice as she talked of the kindness of all in her new home, and of Mr. Leslie particularly. Grace's gentle heart grew anxious, as she thought:

"Will this stranger care to win the heart he has taught to love?"

One day Uncle Armand had started on some pleasure excursion. Willie was very cross at not being permitted to accompany him. Mrs. Laurence resigned the little tyrant to Minnie's charge, believing that, as hitherto, he would soon yield to her gentle firmness. But Willie's good-humor could not be restored. In fact, he grew worse and worse. Minnie, knowing the boy's love for his uncle, said:

"Willie, what will your uncle say, when he hears how naughty you have been? If you will be good now, no one shall tell him. Do you think he can love you if you go on this way?"

"I don't care if he don't love me. He don't love you either. He sha'n't love you. You are ugly. I heard him tell mamma no one could say you were pretty. If he can't love naughty boys he can't love ugly girls. Now, miss! And I'm going to send you away, 'cause if you had asked uncle I could have gone. You sha'n't stay now!"

The boy looked up to see the effect of his words. The sullen expression on his face passed away quickly, as Minnie's hand slid from his shoulder, and with lips pale and quivering, she said:

"Yes, yes, I will go!—I must go!"

And turning from him, she sank in her chair, dropped her head on the desk, and sobbed as if her poor little heart would surely break.

"Minnie!"

She raised her head. Willie was gone. By her side, bending over her, looking down into her eyes, stood Armand Leslie.

"Minnie, are you crying because Willie said those cruel words?" he asked, gently.

"No; I don't care about what Willie said. He was angry, and will be sorry by-and-by. He did not mean it. But everybody thinks I 'm so ugly! No one will ever love me!"

Again the little brown head dropped on the desk; again, in a low, tender voice, Armand Leslie said:

"Minnie!"

She raised her eyes wonderingly to his.

"Minnie, I love you."

The words filled her soul with delight; yet how could she believe such joy was for her?

"You—you pity me! You are sorry for me, you mean?"

"No, I love you, Minnie, truly. I came back to tell you so, and heard Willie's cruel words."

"But I 'm so plain, so ugly, you know, and—"

"You may be plain to others, dear; you were to me once. But believe me, little one, I 'd sooner have your love than the most beautiful woman's I ever knew. To me you are more than beautiful. Look up, dear."

Gently he raised her head.

"Can you love me, Minnie?"

With all the love of her ardent, loving nature beaming from her eyes, she looked into his, and answered:

"More than all the world."

"Ah, little Minnie, love is a great beautifier; and that yearning, hungry heart of yours is fully satisfied now," said Grace, embracing the happy girl.

"Oh, yes! And I'm so truly thankful to you, dear Grace, that instead of marrying old Mr. Plimpton for a home, I went to work to earn one. And what a happy, happy one it will be!" Minnie answered, with tears of joy in her bright eyes.

WAS IT A DREAM?

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

ALTHOUGH more than twenty years have passed since we gathered round our mother's friend and begged her to tell us a ghost story, I can remember every word as distinctly as though only a few days or hours had intervened since then.

We called her Aunt Dora, as she taught us.

In answer to my inquiry, "Has aunty no relatives, mamma, no one nearer to her than you?" my mother said:

"None, dear, that she cares to be with. I will tell you why she loves us. At an early age Dora Carlton was left an orphan, to the guardianship of her father's cousin, Roger Falkland—"

An expression of surprise escaped me, for although the Falkland estate was but few miles distant, no intercourse, since my remembrance, had existed between that family and ours.

"Yes, my dear," continued my mother, "they are Dora's nearest relations; but you must never allude to them as such. Dora was the only child, and consequently heiress to an immense fortune.

"The little orphan was content in her new home. They were all very kind, and nothing marred her happiness until Dora grew to be quite a young lady. Then it was

she knew her cousin Ralf loved her. Not as her cousin, dear, but as a man loves the woman he seeks to win for his wife. Dora was grieved when this knowledge came to her. She had always been fond of Ralf, but the maiden's heart was no longer her own. A young student at the college, and a friend of Ralf's, had won it.

"Roger Falkland sought by every available means to unite his son with his cousin's heiress. But firmly she resisted. At last she astounded her relatives by declaring herself betrothed to Willie Grayson—"

Another exclamation of greater surprise broke from me, and mother continued:

"Yes, dear, she was to have been my sister—my brother's wife. Now you know why we are so dear to her. Angry and fierce words passed between Ralf and Willie, and they were friends no more. Ralf swore he would have revenge. Dora was frightened by his threats. But Willie laughed at her fears, declaring her love would shield him from all harm. Of course he came no more to 'Falkland Hall.' But the lovers met often at a friend's in the village. They parted one evening, with renewed pledges of love and constancy. Willie was going home to spend the Christmas. A week dragged past, and then came a letter of inquiry from his home. Why had he not come to them? All was mystery—dark and unsolvable. Willie never came again, either to home or loved one.

"Dora, after weeks had passed, and still no tidings came to heal the aching heart, gave up all hope, and sank into a state of hopeless melancholy. She knew he lived no longer on earth, or he would come to her. Her heart pointed to her cousin Ralf; yet how could she accuse him? What proof had she? Nothing but Ralf's threat long before, and the expression of his dark eye since. He never approached her with words of love after; nay, even seemed

to shrink from her. He became restless and uneasy at home, and three months after Willie's disappearance sailed for Europe."

"And was there never any tidings from my uncle? No light upon the mystery?" I asked.

"Yes, we afterward knew that he was murdered; but I cannot tell you about it now, love. See, father is coming to dinner. Some time soon I will," mother answered.

But the remainder of the story came not from her.

The next day she was summoned to a dear friend who was dying, and pleaded to see her.

During mamma's absence, one night sisters and I sat in the moonlight, talking of supernatural things. Aunt Dora was passing through the room. Something we said arrested her steps. She drew near, and I, jumping up, passed my arm around her, and drawing her down between us, asked:

"Do you believe in ghosts, Aunt Dora?"

She did not answer immediately. I was about repeating my inquiry, when she said, in a strange, low voice:

"I did not at your age. I hardly know whether I do now, but I am sure not just as you mean. I have never *seen* anything to make me."

"Aunty, but I know you have a story you could tell us, if you only would," I pleaded, Emma and Lottie joining me.

"I will tell you, my dears," Aunt Dora said. And with our hands clasped in hers, she began:

"Years ago, when scarcely older than you, Fannie, I lost one dearer than all the world to me. One night we parted full of hope and happy plans for the future. We never met again. All was a mystery concerning him. Nothing was known, save that he never was seen after leaving me. Weeks, months and years passed by, and still no tidings came to those who loved him.

"For hours, at midnight, I would sit in a room where he had often slept, waiting, hoping, praying to see him or feel him near. There are days sacred to me, and have been since he left me—the one of our betrothal, and that of his departure. I never think of him as dead—only sent from me—waiting my coming in a better land. On one of these days I was left alone in the great house. I was not sorry. They were to be absent all day, and until late in the evening, and urged my either accompanying them or securing the presence of some friend. But I heeded them not. What they dreaded I yearned after, longed for, every day and hour.

"I visited every spot connected in any way with him. When twilight came on, I gathered up every letter, book and token, and sought his room, as I called it. I must get somehow through the vale of shadows, somewhere near him, I felt. I heard the wind whistling through the great poplars, and knew a storm was coming. I welcomed it, knowing it would prolong the folks' absence. On and on I sat listening to the sighing and moaning of the wind, waiting and watching. At length wearied, I dropped my head on the table beside me. I felt the air blowing cold upon me, and knew the door had opened. I cared not. The lock was old and insecure, and had yielded to the pressure of the wind, I thought. It was too dark to see. I would not strike a light lest I should break the gentle influence which seemed stealing over me. A little while longer, and as plainly as I feel your hands in my own now, I felt Willie's that night, passing gently over my brow, smoothing back my hair, as he had often done before. I was not frightened. I felt he was near me, and was comforted. His dear voice was sounding in my ear, bidding me grieve no more, and telling of the beautiful happy land from which he had come to comfort me. And

then he told me of a hidden spot in the valley, not far away, where I could find what was left of the form he used to wear. Then a name I loathed fell on my ear, with the words, 'He is no more of earth. His secret need no longer be buried.'

"I uttered a cry then, and started forward, upsetting the slight table, and causing a loud crash. A few moments after I heard footsteps on the stairs, and very soon the folks came in with a light, declaring I must have been very sound asleep, as they had called me loudly about the house.

"'How strange you look, Dora! You must have been dreaming,' said one.

"*Had* I been dreaming? I know not. But when I told them one they loved was no more, they called me crazed; and again, when I sent for the friends of my love, and went with them to the spot in the valley, and there found him for whom we had sought so long, they drew away from me, and were well pleased that I returned no more to *their* home, but sought one with Willie's friends. *Was* I dreaming? I asked myself again, when tidings came of the murderer's death in a foreign land. And often have I since. I know not; I only know I was comforted."

Aunt Dora's story was ended, and mamma's finished, I knew.

WON AGAIN.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"HOW could she have married **him?** That stern, cold—"

I was going to say something more, but stopped. I would not speak disrespectfully of him to his housekeeper, although I almost hated him, because of the change, the terrible change, I found in the child of my dearest friend. In form, features, aye, in mind and heart I met the change. Sixteen years had passed since I saw her last, and then at fourteen Clarice was the loveliest, brightest, merriest, and truly the most bewitching little maid I ever saw. A beautiful Southern singing bird, wild and free, although now only the shadow of herself. You could see she came from those of a sunny clime. Her mother was French, her father from the South of our own land. I was upon the sea when the little Clarice's mother went to heaven. And when, four years after, I came home, they told me the child was fatherless, too, and with her guardians in the North. And this man—*now* her husband—was the one her father left her to.

"How could she have married *him?*" again I asked, my thoughts going back to a frank and noble youth who loved her well, I knew, and of the hope that filled my own heart for his success.

"Ah! that's what many before you have asked," said

Margery Moore. "And now I wonder so myself. But *then* he was not quite so bad. No, I don't mean *bad*. I don't know how I came to say it. For never a cross word has he ever said to me, and I've lived with him full thirty years. I meant to say so—so—still and strange. *Then* it did not seem so wonderful. She could have liked—yes, loved him. I'll tell you just how it was, as near as I can. Just thirteen years and a half ago my master, Mr. Hugh, called me into his room. He was sitting, with an open letter in his hand.

"I saw directly something was wrong with him. His eyebrows were drawn close together, his lips as tight as could be.

"'Margery,' he said, 'an old friend, one that I loved, and one that has placed great confidence in me, is dead. His only child, a little girl, he has left to my charge. Do you think you can take care of her? Can you attend to her wants until she is old enough to be sent to school?'

"'Indeed I can, sir, and should love to have a child about the house,' I said. Then he looked a little relieved, and said:

"'Very well. Oh, *I* dread it. I suppose we shall have nothing but whining and crying for the next six months, until she gets used to us. Margery, you must go fetch her. Take lots of things that children like—a doll, toys, and sugar-plums—to stop her crying and win her over. And I say, Margery, the day before I expect you home I shall go off—only for two or three weeks—travel a little until the child gets used to the place. I could not stand her fussing around, crying for her mother and father. I don't know, but she may need a nurse. Well, you will know. Go as soon as you can, and don't let us talk any more about the child.'

"The next morning he put a purse, well-filled, in my hands. And two days after I started to fetch the child.

"Well, *you* know what a surprise it was to me when I found her. I need not tell you that if she had chosen she could have remained in a Southern home. Why she could not have loved one who seemed so worthy I can't tell."

"Ah, Margery, who can tell the *why* of a woman's heart?" I answered, my own full of regrets and sorrow.

"Yes, yes, you are right," said Margery. "I fear she has pined for a brighter home than ours. Mr. Hugh was absent, as he had said he would be, when I got back again.

"How well I remember the look of surprise and disappointment on the child's face when I carried her to see the portrait of her guardian hanging in the great hall.

"'Does he never laugh?' she asked.

"I shook my head.

"'Nor smile?' she continued, her great eyes growing larger.

"'Rarely,' I answered; and then, lest she should grow frightened with thoughts of so stern a man, I said: 'Mr. Hugh is a great student. The lives and fortunes of many depend on his thought and words. It is not meet that a judge should be a merry man.'

"This seemed to satisfy her a bit, and with a knowing little look and a graver air, she said:

"'That is true. But some time, long ago, when papa loved him, and he was only Mr. Hugh, not Judge Archer, was he not different, then?'

"'Oh, yes, then he was as other young men. But now he is five-and-thirty, you know,' I answered; and could have told of one as young and beautiful as she having won his heart, and then cast it aside, to be worse than broken —hardened, and filled with doubts, and trusting none; for that it was that made him so.

"'Then if once like other men, he shall be again. I'll coax back his smiles, and make him love me, too. For I shall love him because papa bade me to.'

"A letter from our 'master,' as Clarice laughingly called her guardian, told when he would be home. 'If the child has not got pacified yet, keep her out of my way, for mercy's sake!' he wrote; and how merrily she laughed about it.

"I almost dreaded his coming. Such a change she had wrought in the great, dark, gloomy rooms!

"She ransacked the store-room and closets, trunks and boxes; found bright covering for the old faded sofas and chairs; brightened up the pictures, and brought out 'our master's' picture, hung it over the mantel of his room, and decked it with evergreens; brought forth numberless little vases of flowers of her own work, and pretty things of china and marble, and put them all in his room; and then, to my horror, laid her hands on his books and papers. It was no use, all I could say. She would do as she would.

"'*Now* he will know where to find just what he wants without tumbling over everything for one. Oh! they are all right, Margy. I always fixed papa's. And he was a lawyer, too!' she said, when she saw how frightened I looked.

"Then all the old silver was made to look like new. And last of all, she coaxed me into a lot of unnecessary trouble, in the way of 'nice things for supper that night.'

"She was hid behind the door of the room she had made so beautiful, when he entered. And I stood trembling in a far corner. Round and round he turned. Passed his hand across his brow like one only half awake.

"'Where am I, Margery?' he called.

"I was trembling so I could not answer. In an instant, from behind the door, quickly came Clarice, and went right up to 'our master's' side, saying:

"'Won't *I* do? Margery is out somewhere.'

"I had darted into the passage. But near enough to see and hear.

"How beautiful she was! Her dark eyes dancing with delight. Her cheeks brighter than any roses I ever saw. Her hand was on his arm, and again she spoke to him:

"'Let me take your coat and hat.' And in another instant she had pulled off his fur gloves, and began rubbing his hands, and saying:

"'Oh, how cold your hands are! Margy! Margy! come help to get 'our master' warm.'

"'Who are you?' he managed to say at length.

"Then such a merry, ringing laugh sounded through the great room, and she said:

"'Your child, Clarice Gordon! A real good child she will be, and not cry a bit if you will only love her a little. See, I *am* pacified!'

"There was such a merry twinkle in her eye, and remembering his words, he had to smile and asked, in a voice more like that of years gone by:

"'How old are you, Clarice?'

"'Seventeen, almost. Come, say, are you pleased or cross? Margery said you would be just so—' she put up and crossed her little fingers, again repeating her inquiry.

"'I am pleased that you are happy,' he said.

"And I knew, then, she had won her way.

"Yes, he *was* pleased. He liked being made so much of; liked having the beautiful girl flitting about and 'taking care of him,' as she called her pretty ways.

"She threw wide open all the doors and windows, and let the sunshine into the house and into the master's heart too.

"She coaxed him to take her about in town, and among his friends. She had young folks often at the 'Grange;'

and soon, of course, lovers enough. But she laughed at them all, declaring she was going to stay with her guardian all the days of her life. Well, whether he really *loved* her, or whether he feared some one might win her away, I can't tell. I only know he came to me and told me Clarice was to be his wife, and she, hugging me almost breathless, said:

"'Dear old Margy, you see *now* I've made 'our master' love me. Now is he not like he *used* to be, a little?'

"They were married and went away. And I had things as I knew would please her when they came back.

"Things for a while went on well enough. Sometimes he would get in his old way; but she would win him from it. But after a bit, these spells came closer together, and always when she went from home; than she seldom left him. But folks all about liked her, and would come to see her—old and young. After a little—I knew just how it was—he was jealous of everybody, and wanted to cage the beautiful bird, to keep her to himself alone. She tried hard enough to please *him*. Only she could not be other than charming to all who came; and all kept on coming.

"He grew worse and worse back to his old ways. He never chided, only by looks, so cold and stern. When the baby came I thought things would grow bright again. *Her* heart was full of hope, I know. She was very ill. Pale faces and anxious hearts were in the house that day. But she lived. What for? I've often thought. God forgive me. I've heard her say, with her baby pressed close to her bosom:

"'Oh, little one, why could not you and I have gone to heaven?'

"For a little after that baby came he was kinder, and would sit in the nursery, and seemed quite happy again. But when the mother grew well and could go about again the old mood grew on him. The baby was her comfort.

And so things went on until the little Pearl was three years old."

"Did he love the babe?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, he loved her; that I know. And she was wonderfully fond of him. She was such a sweet winning child! And sometimes, with her sweet ways, she would draw the two together. Baby though she was, she seemed to know something was wrong. The day before she was taken ill, he came in with her in his arms. Clarice came up, and putting out her hands, said:

"'Come to mamma.'

"The babe started up, and was about to spring to her mother's arms when something in his face made her turn and look doubtful.

"'Stay with me,' he whispered. 'Come to mamma,' pleaded she.

"From one to the other the sweet eyes turned, and then, with one arm still around her father, she leaned forward, clasping the other about her mother, and lisped:

"'Pearl loves both—wants to stay with both!'

"With all her little strength she drew them together. Had she lived, she would have held them so, I truly believe. Well, you have heard that, after a few hours' illness, our darling went to heaven. Oh, then came this fearful change! If he had not alone nursed his sorrow but shared with her, I think she could have borne it better. With never a caress, never a word of love or sympathy, the months and years have passed; and now, at last, the end has come. You have come to take her from us, back to her own sunny home. I shall never see her more, I know. If she leaves, it will be forever."

"Margery," I said, "do you not see she is dying here—starving? I must take her to those who will feed her with the best of all food—sympathy and love. We will bring back life and hope."

Her physician had advised travel, change of scene. She insisted she was not ill, and seemed careless of everything. Not even the thought of revisiting the home and friends of her childhood aroused any interest, and he neither opposed nor sanctioned the doctor's advice.

Things were in this state when I found Clarice. At length she agreed to go with me.

"Shall I go?" she forced herself, from the barrier of ice, to ask.

"As you please," he answered, in a voice that made me shiver.

Ah, he knew well enough when she left, it would be forever! She could have won him again, I am sure. Could the wounded heart have ceased its smarting? I knew what it was. I could solve the mystery. Disappointed that her power had so soon failed—mortified that she had tried to win a love so short-lived, and wounded to the very quick by his cold indifference, she had drawn herself behind a wall of ice. For nearly eight years she had lived thus. And he had been disappointed. He had expected the merry child to continue her loving wiles—on and on, never growing less, although he threw not a ray of sunshine on her path. Caged, yet he expected her to sing as when free, and taught by love.

She was ready to start. Like an automaton, she had moved about making the necessary preparations. Everything that told of little Pearl was collected and packed. Only one—her picture, that hung in his room. Could she leave that? No; she must, she would take it. She believed him away, purposely to avoid a parting.

Creeping, fearful of even a remonstrance from Margery, she entered the room. All was quiet. Stepping on a chair, she lifted the pictured angel-child, and clasping it tightly to her bosom, was turning to leave the room, when a hand was laid not heavily, only firmly, on her shoulder.

"You must not take that, Clarice," her husband said.

"I must—I shall! She was mine. I cannot leave this," she cried.

"I have nothing else. Give me it!" He took hold of the picture; she clinging tightly, cried:

"No, no, to me; give her to me!"

Hush! A sweet, tiny voice was heard. Clarice's eyes were lifted; her ear strained to catch the sound. Her husband's face had lost its sternness. His bosom rose and fell convulsively.

"Pearl loves both; wants to stay with both," fell clearly, distinctly on the ear of each. The mother's hold was loosened, and sobbing, she sank to the floor.

Had the angel-child's spirit hovered about them? Was her mission to unite again the sundered hearts? Or, was it only the well-remembered cry of the baby-girl that filled the ear, and entered the hearts of both at that moment? Who knows?

Stooping, he gently raised her, bent his head, and said, in a soft, low tone:

"Let her be with both, Clarice, and if our darling's spirit hovers near, let her find us not apart."

It was little Pearl's father that spoke thus.

Won again—won forever—back to love! back to God! We went South together, she, I, and the baby's father. Rapidly Clarice's health and spirits returned. "The effects of the warmer clime," her friends said. I knew what it was, and thanked God, feeling sure that when again in her Northern home no chilling blasts would hurt her. There was warmth in the heart that was bound to shield her. She has only the babe in heaven.

"Thank God for giving me little Pearl! Better to have had her taken than never given," she said—"than never to have known my baby's blessed influence."

LADY MARGARET.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

JUDGE VERNON had been childless for years, when little Margaret came to him. It was a great disappointment to both parents that the little stranger was not a boy, but loved her none the less. Indeed, they made an idol of their beautiful child The title of "Lady Margaret" had been given her by the nurse ere the little one was fully a month old.

Her constant companion was the gardener's little son Joseph. He was such a spirited, handsome, bewitching boy, that no wonder the cry oft arose to Judge Vernon's lips:

"Why could not such a son have been given me?"

Joseph Grey was five years old when Lady Margaret's tiny fingers clasped tightly his. Her very first smile was given to him. Joseph it was who guided her footsteps in the first attempts to walk, encouraged and coaxed her lisping words, and almost went wild with delight when the pretty ruby lips spoke plainly, "Josie."

When the little lady was seven years old a governess was obtained for her. Every morning, seated beside her in the school-room, Josie was found. It was my little lady's will to have him there, and both parents and teacher were well pleased to have it so. So the years rolled on until Lady Margaret reached her twelfth year,

Mrs. Vernon's health, never robust, had been steadily declining since her daughter's birth. Her physician insisted that she should try the influence of another and milder clime.

Judge Vernon, resigning his law duties, and leaving the homestead in charge of Josie's father, carried his wife and daughter to the south of France. Every fortnight brought letters from Judge Vernon, and for the first two years they always gladdened Josie's heart with messages from the little lady to her playmate. The third year the poor boy was often disappointed. Lady Margaret seldom then sent even a word of remembrance. At length that stopped. All mention of *her* name with regard to Joseph ceased entirely.

Mrs. Vernon's health was not improved, as they had hoped, by the change. Indeed she grew so much weaker they dared not attempt the homeward journey. And so they lingered abroad for five years. Then Margaret and her father came. Three months previous they had placed the loved form in the graveyard of Toulouse. Tenderly Mrs. Grey soothed the motherless girl. She, too, poor woman, had had her sorrow. Josie's father had passed from earth during their absence.

Gently raising the bowed head, she said:

"Here is your old playmate waiting to welcome you home, Lady Margaret."

Fondly and proudly the mother's eyes rested on her son as he came forward, his handsome face beaming with the joy *her* coming had brought him.

"Thank God for your safe return home, my little lady." Ah, the loved title burst forth, although he had thought to say "Miss Vernon."

"For she is a young lady now, and you must never forget that, my boy. She must be called Miss V——." Jo[illegible]her had said, only a few hours before.

And when the beautiful, stately maiden raised her eyes there was a startled expression in them that the poor youth scarce understood.

"Thank you, I am glad to be home again," she said, in answer to his glad greeting, placing her hand in his.

"As if we had parted only a few days or hours before," Joseph said, in an agony of disappointment.

"Such a greeting, after all these years of weary waiting. Oh, my little lady, I would have given years of life to have heard those sweet lips say 'Josie.' But my little lady is Miss Vernon now. And I, let me not forget—I am only the gardener's son."

At the same hour, in her own room, Margaret was thinking of that meeting, and said:

"Yes, I might have been more kind. He, too, has had his sorrow. And not even when the news of his father's death reached us, did I send one word of sympathy to him. Ah, that we were still children together! What is home without mother and Josie? The one gone; the other to be put aside. Yes, yes, better commence the bitter task at once."

The day after Judge Vernon's return, Joseph Grey requested his presence in the library, where he placed for his inspection a book neatly and accurately kept, of the expenditures and receipts during the judge's absence.

"Why, my boy, this is excellently well done, but you have taken a great deal of unnecessary trouble. I explained to your good father, that I wanted him to make the place clear expenses during my absence. But I suppose his illness, and— Well, my boy, we have both had our sorrow. I scarcely feel like attending to business. You can tell me how we stand; what indebtedness?"

"On the contrary, sir," Joseph interposed, "you'll see here that I have placed to your account five thousand dollars," handing a bank book.

"Impossible! Why, my boy—" Here the judge stopped. took off his glasses, wiped them, and looking intently at Joseph, he said:

"You are no longer a boy. How old are you, Joseph?"

"My own man, sir," Joseph answered, smilingly, adding, "twenty-one, six months ago."

Again arose the cry in Judge Vernon's heart, "Oh, why could not such a son have been given me?"

"Joseph, that sum I shall immediately transfer to your credit. It is justly yours," Judge Vernon said, handing back the books.

"No, sir, I cannot permit that." How handsome he looked; and though his manner was deeply respectful, there was a flush that mantled the noble brow, a light in his eye that Judge Vernon understood, and thought: "How proud he is! Oh, that there were more like him—George Mason, for instance. *Then* I could give my Margaret to him, feeling confident of her happiness."

"Well, Joseph, you have plans for the future; of course you cannot stay here. Regret as I shall to lose you, I would send you forth, I feel *sure*, to a path of honor and distinction. Can I help you?" Judge Vernon said, with much feeling.

Joseph caught his hand, and pressing it warmly, answered:

"Thank you, dear sir, both for your offer and good—nay, flattering opinion. You *can* help me; I heard you say you should resume your legal duties. I should like to read law with you."

"With pleasure, my boy. Then we shall not be separated yet a while. I see plainly how much knowledge you have gained during my absence. You have studied hard—you must have."

"I have studied much, sir. But 'twas not hard, I love it so."

The conversation was interrupted by a gentle knock on the door, and immediately Margaret came in, saying:

"Please, papa, go see Mr. Mason. He is in the drawing-room. I do not feel like receiving calls to-day. Excuse me, please."

"Well, well, to-day I will. But you must be polite to him, my love. I cannot forget how attentive he was to us across the water. His father was my dearest friend."

Joseph's heart gave a bound of joy. She would surely linger a few moments—speak, perchance, of the old times, and call him again Josie.

He raised his eyes, full of glad expectation. They met hers, and with a pleasant smile and "Good-morning," she passed from the room.

* * * * * * *

"Indeed, my little lady, I must learn to call you differently. I can scarcely believe my own eyes, you have grown so tall and womanly. But five years bring great changes. Look at Josie!" There was pride in the mother's voice and eyes.

"Yes—you may well be proud of Josie, nurse. I suppose he is a great favorite with the village girls?" Margaret said.

If the mother had read Margaret's eyes aright, she would have seen more interest there than she would imagine, from the cold, steady voice.

"Ah, yes, indeed. And there is more than one, whose eyes would brighten at his coming. But he only cares for his books, my lady. Every spare hour he is in the library."

The anxious look gave way, and Margaret's beautiful eyes were full of peace, as she turned to meet Joseph.

"The first flowers and fruit of the season, Miss Vernon," he said, holding towards her a bouquet of roses and violets and placing on the table a basket of strawberries

How smiling and happy he looked! She knew he must have heard her last words to his mother. Her face was hid among the flowers, to hide the crimson-tide.

"How beautiful! Thank you," she said. Placing the flowers in a vase, she turned away.

"She might have put them in her own room," sighed Joseph. "But I will not grieve for this. She is not altogether indifferent to me. She called me Josie. She cannot have forgotten—no, she remembers—that she is Miss Vernon, and the difference, nay, the distance between us."

Indeed, after that day the distance seemed to widen. Mrs. Grey, who, during the absence of the family, had occupied apartments in Vernon Mansion, a few days after their return went back to the gardener's cottage.

A few weeks after this, Joseph Grey was in the library at Judge Vernon's request, copying a legal document, when the door opened, and Margaret and her father entered.

"Can you give your father a few moments, my daughter? Since your young friends have been here, I hardly get a look at you, or have you a moment all to myself."

"Oh, you dearest of fathers, do not be jealous! Do you not know that you will have me *all alone* to yourself as long as you live?" Margaret said, clasping her arms about his neck and pressing her lips to his.

"No, no, love! No, little lady. I want to talk to you about just this very thing. I have a letter from George Mason. You must read it, and give me his answer."

More rapidly went Joseph's pen. Louder the scratching on the paper. He could not get out without passing them. He hoped they would hear him. He was revolving in his mind *what* to do, when Margaret said:

"I shall never marry, father."

"Nay, nay, love. You distress me. I should not be content to seek your mother, leaving you alone here. You do not dislike Mason, my dear?"

"Oh, no. But I do not like him well enough to marry him, papa."

"Let me give him hope! for my sake, dear! There is no one that I could give you to that I like so well. Ah, if it were not—"

An exclamation of pain, almost simultaneously with which Margaret, in a low, warning voice, said: "Father!" and Joseph Grey came forward.

"What is it, Joseph? You are ill surely."

"No, dear sir. A sudden and sharp pain which I hope will not be continual," Joseph answered.

"Ah, I know you have been working too hard. There, go home and rest, my boy."

As Joseph passed Lady Margaret he raised his eyes to hers. She could not have mistaken the wild, appealing look; yet turning away she said:

"I will try to make you happy, father."

That evening Joseph Grey announced to Judge Vernon his intention of leaving home the next day.

"So sudden this is, my boy," surprised and pained, the judge said.

"No, sir. I've been intending for several weeks to tell you; but I dreaded so much this separation I have delayed speaking of it until the latest moment," Joseph answered, with much feeling.

There was a long conversation, and the judge concluded by saying:

"I will say good-by to-night. I may not be up in the morning. Write to me, dear boy. And call on me if I can help you. Feel as if you were applying to your father, Joseph; and now God bless you!"

Early the next morning a wild cry arose in the Vernon mansion. Judge Vernon's spirit had fled.

* * * * * * *

The hour for Joseph's departure came. He had watched an opportunity when finding Margaret alone to say good-by.

Paler than the pale girl before him, he approached her.

"Miss Vernon, I am going. I have come to say good-by."

She did not speak. She had been prepared for it. She arose and held out her hand.

"Good-by, Miss Vernon."

He stood before her, holding her hand tightly between his own. She raised her eyes, to meet a world of love in his. Quickly her own drooped, and seeking to release her hand, she said:

"Good-by."

"And this is all. You will send me forth without a word, a kind wish! Oh, my little lady, say 'I'll not forget you, Josie!' Oh, turn not away, Lady Margaret! Speak to me! For never loved man as I love you! my lady! my queen!" Joseph cried, still tightly holding her hand.

Ah, she raised not her eyes as she spoke the cruel words.

"You forget! The women of our race have never blushed for the object of their love. They never unite their fate except with those of whom not only they, but their country, were proud. Go! May you be prosperous and happy. Farewell!"

She disengaged her hand, and turned away.

The door closed after him. A moment more and she hid her face amid the cushions of the sofa, and with a moan of agony, cried:

"Alone! Alone! *All* gone now!"

"My little lady!"

She sprang up to see Joseph bending over her.

"Why are you here?" she asked, reproachfully.

"Why? To pledge my heart, my life to you! To tell

you, my proud lady, that I *will* win you! Heaven will reward such love as mine. I ask no word of hope *now*. But I shall work and pray, and you may know that I am waiting for you to bid me 'come.'"

"Go! oh, go!" she cried, beseechingly.

He turned, hesitated, and sprang forward to catch her to his heart—to hold her there an instant only, press his lips to her brow, and cry:

"God bless and keep you, my love, my life!" and passed from her sight.

If Joseph confided his love to his mother, she gave no intimation whatever of it to Margaret.

Immediately after her son's departure, Mrs. Grey became again an inmate of Margaret's home. Then, as a guest and esteemed friend, Margaret never again addressed her by the old title of "nurse." Very soon the servants caught their mistress's mood, and, ere long, it seemed that the household, even Mrs. Grey herself, forgot that she had ever been other than the dear friend and guest of the Vernon family.

Margaret seldom went into society. Still her beauty attracted many admirers. Suitors she had, one after another, meeting the same fate. Perhaps it was harder for her to put aside her father's choice, or, perhaps, he was more determined than the others. At any rate, George Mason continued his visits. Joseph, in his far Western home, knew of this, but his faith never grew less.

From letters to his mother, Margaret only knew of his good health and good spirits. Thus the months grew into years. Then from the political journals she learned of Joseph's rapidly growing popularity. Of his advance to one and another position of greater importance.

Five years past—oh, such long weary years to the waiting hearts at home. In answer to the oft-repeated cry, "My boy, come to me!" he would write:

"Not yet can I come! Would to Heaven I might!"

Margaret alone understood this.

"Oh, *why* will he not come? I am almost dying to see my boy!" his mother said. Margaret's heart echoed this cry, yet she would not send that one little word.

George Mason, at length, despairing of winning Margaret, had transferred his affections to her dearest friend, a beautiful little blonde, whose loving nature soon comforted him for any disappointment he might have suffered.

Eagerly Margaret watched the papers to know of Joseph's upward career. She knew that he was to represent his adopted State at the national capital. There she would go with his mother, and amid the throng meet him. This she had determined. The prospect of seeing her boy was joy too great for the anxious mother. As the time drew near, her excitement grew intense; and the day which was to have carried them to Washington brought to Joseph the long-looked-for word from Lady Margaret:

"Come," she wrote, "your mother is ill. We cannot come to you."

Ah, did ever so few words bring so much of joy and sorrow combined!

Weary with long watching in the sick-room, Margaret stole out to wait for Joseph's coming.

"If in his eyes I find the same old look, the love of years shall find its own. Oh, my love shall have a joyful greeting," she said.

Watching, waiting, eager, she pressed her hand over her heart to still its wild beating.

"Oh, why does he not come? What can detain him?"

Wearily she sank back, her heart filled with fears.

Presently a murmur of hushed voices, slow, cautious steps; and the dreadful words—"dying or dead," reached her ear. Then she heard of a frightful collision, and when the door opened, she sprang up with a cry of agony:

"Oh, my love! my love! you must not die!"

"Die? Why, you have been dreaming, my darling! No, dear love, I have just now begun to live," Joseph said, holding her closer to his heart, as he read in her eyes all the love for which he had waited and worked.

When Joseph had spent an hour, cheering and making well his mother, he coaxed Margaret away, to whisper in her ear:

"My lady, do you know, you have not said to me even one little word of love, save those from a terrible dream! Oh, my love is a proud little lady still," he said, playfully raising her face, more beautiful than ever, now flushed with joy. He was more than satisfied, when she placed her hand in his, and said:

"Yes, I am prouder now than ever in life before: and my greatest pride shall always be to be worthy of your love, Josia."

SPOONS.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

THE clear, smooth brow of Mrs. St. James clouded and contracted unmistakably. As she stood at the window, her eyes wandering about the beautiful grounds surrounding her home, they rested on two figures seated in a rustic arbor. They were her daughter Alice and young Gerald Clifton. Now Mrs. St. James would have preferred seeing any other of the young gentlemen of her acquaintance with Alice, than the present one. She turned impatiently from the window, saying:

"My remonstrance is useless. She is perfectly infatuated—and her father scarcely less so. I can't imagine what he is thinking about. He has not a care about his child making a brilliant match. There is Albert Hyde, young Lord Clavering, and half a dozen others, any of whom she could marry: all eligible, and should be considered really more desirable and worthy. But no—this young man, with neither wealth nor position, has, I fear, secured the hearts of both Alice and her father. And I really think, unless something providential prevents, she will marry him."

The lovely Alice, quite unconscious of the unfavorable eyes which had lingered on them, was listening with delight to a beautiful poem her lover was reading. Suddenly

he closed the book, and looking earnestly on his companion said:

"Your mother dislikes me very much, Alice. I fear I shall never win her favor."

"No, no, not dislike you: but there are others she likes better, perhaps. But papa will yet win her over. He loves you, and mamma dearly loves him. So in time all will be well," answered Alice, with a sweet, assuring smile.

"I trust so, Alice. And in time I will prove worthy of your love and your father's confidence. I will make a name for you, love, with Heaven's blessing."

A week or so after, Sydney St. James was returning home from his editorial office. He had had a harassing day, and was very tired. He wanted rest, and a quiet evening; saying to himself, "I trust we shall have no company, unless Gerald; he never wearies me. Bless the boy! I am growing strangely fond of him." He entered the house, made his way to the parlor, where he was accustomed to find his family. Alas! for his hopes of rest and quiet. There, instead of the usual pleasant greeting from his wife, the bright smile and loving embrace of his daughter, he found the first very much excited, with flashing eyes and glowing cheeks; the latter sobbing, her face hidden in the cushion of the sofa. Hastily approaching her, he raised her head tenderly and asked:

"What is it, love?"

Another rush of tears; then her head nestled in her father's bosom.

"What has happened?" he asked, in real anxiety, looking to his wife.

"Well, I always knew something was wrong about him, and how very presumptuous he was; but I never did suppose he would descend to such a low, crim—"

"Mamma! oh, don't, pray!" sobbed Alice.

"He! who? What is it?" asked Mr. St. James, growing more and more anxious.

"Well, your great favorite, Mr. Clifton, was here at noon, to take leave of Alice, before leaving for Scotland. We were about going out shopping when he came; so of course were detained. I drew off my gloves, and laid them, with my porte-monnaie, handkerchief and sunshade on the centre table. I saw him take up the porte-monnaie, and look at it; I thought just admiring it. You know it was that pearl and inlaid one you gave me at Christmas. Well, after a little while I went into the next room, immediately returning when I heard him about leaving. I bade him good-by in the hall, and proceeded to draw on my gloves again, intending to go on our proposed excursion. I missed the porte-monnaie; but thinking Alice had put it in her pocket, I was not anxious. When she was again ready to start, I said:

"'You have the money?'

"'No,' she replied.

"We began to look about, but our hunt was in vain. You can readily arrive at the conclusion, and the cause of Alice's mortification and grief," said Mrs. St. James, in a manner and tone that looked and sounded very much like she was rather glad of it.

"And do you for a moment imagine, or would have me, that Clifton—" Mr. St. James hesitated.

"Stole it? Certainly."

Another sob from Alice, with the cry:

"Don't—don't, mamma!"

"Tut, tut, tut, wife. Hush, Alice, love. There is some mistake. I'd risk all my worldly possessions—aye, and my life—on Gerald's honesty and noble nature," said Mr. St. James.

"You would lose both, then. There is no mistake, my dear. You know he has been much embarrassed in money matters. I know no one entered this room but him; and I know the porte-monnaie is gone, and in it a hundred pounds. You can call it by what name you choose. I have my own idea about the matter. However, should you put it in the mildest form, kleptomania would not be a very desirable acquisition to our family. Alice, I think, feels fully sensible of that. Why you have thought so much of him I cannot tell."

"Why?" and the dark brown eyes of Sydney St. James grew more earnest, and glowed with a tender, loving light; and in a voice full of emotion, he said, "Why? Because I, who have no son of my own, see in this young man a reproduction of myself—the struggles of my youth. So much he brings to my mind those years of trial—oh, those long, weary, heart-sickening years!—when, alone in my humble, cheerless room, I brewed my own coffee, broiled my chops, and worked—worked, day and night, so long before I could get any production accepted, and then, for many months after, before I received any remuneration. And then how small it was! how meagrely dealt out! Aye, and in the very act of which you accuse him, most forcibly I see the great resemblance between us.

"At the time when the 'Prison Reform Bill' was very much engrossing the public mind, my fortunes took a favorable turn. I wrote a leader on that subject. It was published, and although I am sure it was no better than many I had written before, it pleased the people. A few days after, when in the office of the editor of the journal in which my productions were principally published, that gentleman handed me a note, which opening I found was from the Secretary of the Premier, saying his lordship

would be pleased to see me, and appointing the next day for my call. Lord Cedarcliff received me most kindly, complimenting me on that article, that really proved the making of my present success. That call was the beginning of my intimacy with his lordship. A few days after, I was invited to a dinner party given by Lord Cedarcliff. There I met many of the noble and distinguished men of the time. It was my first dinner party, and naturally I was considerably embarrassed. However, his lordship's kindness, and the marked attention of many of his guests, placed me more at ease. During the dinner, Lord Cedarcliff called our attention to a gold spoon, curiously wrought, and very valuable. It was said to have belonged to the camp equipage of Napoleon. The conversation, then, from the Emperor and his battles, naturally turned to those of the Crimea, and the prolonged siege of Sebastopol. Several of the gentlemen expressed their views as to how the city might have been taken; and I, considerably excited by the wine, and like most young men, possessing my full share of egotism, had my ideas about the matter. So I began to explain how Sebastopol might have been taken very speedily. With the handle of the Emperor's spoon, I marked my plan on the table-cloth. After a little I became conscious that a silence more than profound, really painful, had fallen upon the company. I felt confident it could not have been occasioned by their great interest in my theme. I had wearied them, most likely, or perhaps I had said or done something very *outré*. The embarrassment was somewhat relieved by his lordship's making the move for our adjournment to the drawing-room. There, however, I could not fail to observe that I had in some way lost favor. His lordship was *too* polite, frigidly so. In truth, the whole atmosphere seemed changed. At length I excused myself, and left, sadly mystified as to the

change, in not only his lordship's treatment of me, but likewise of most of his guests.

"A few days after, I called on Lord Cedarcliff, but was told by the butler that his lordship was engaged; again the next day, with the same result; a third time, with no better success. Determining to press the matter a little, and find out, if possible, what such treatment meant, I asked:

"'When can I see his lordship?'

"Judge of my mortification, when the butler replied:

"'It will not be agreeable for his lordship to receive Mr. St. James now, or at any future time.'

"I could not imagine what I had done to merit such a change in the Premier's kind feeling. In vain I asked myself, over and over, 'What did I say or do at the dinner-table?' for I was sensible the change took place there.

"That evening I was engaged to go with a friend to the opera. I felt in no mood for such enjoyment, I was so depressed by my reception at the Premier's mansion. However, my friend would not excuse me, and so I began getting ready to accompany him. Taking from the closet my only dress coat—indeed I may say my only respectable one—which was kept for great occasions, I began to brush and dust it. I had not worn it since the Premier's dinner party. While thus engaged, the brush struck against something in the pocket. Putting my hand in to ascertain what it was, I drew out—oh, horror!—the Emperor's golden spoon!

"The mystery was solved then. I had pocketed that spoon while seated at his lordship's table. Many times—in fact I was accustomed, when deeply interested in conversation, to pocket pens, pencils, knives, handkerchiefs and napkins; but never before anything of much value. For a moment I was [illegible]

could only gaze wildly from the spoon to my friend. Then, hurriedly pulling on my coat, I caught up my hat, still grasping the spoon, rushed out of the room, down the stairs, and into the street. My companion started to follow me, calling out:

"'St. James, are you mad? Stop! I must go with you!"

"I stopped not, nor deigned a word of reply, but rushed on through the streets until I reached the Premier's dwelling. I rang the bell, and when the butler opened the door, I said:

"'I must see his lordship. Tell him it is a matter of life and death!'

"My excited manner testified to the urgency of my case, so the man turned to do my bidding. With quick, noiseless steps I followed behind him. He opened the door of his lordship's sanctum, but before he opened his mouth to speak, I rushed past him, and up to the nobleman's side, exclaiming:

"'My lord, here is your spoon—that Emperor's spoon! On my honor—' Excited as I was, I could detect a curl of the haughty lip, as if to signify his lordship's doubt of my possessing that quality. 'Ah, I fear you think I know nothing of such a feeling,' I continued; 'but, as heaven hears me, I had no more idea of having taken that spoon, until fifteen minutes ago, than your lordship has now of having purloined the crown jewels.'

"My look, words and manner enforced conviction. After an instant his lordship grasped my hand, saying:

"'I believe you, St. James. I wonder, now, how I could ever have doubted you. I might have known how it was.'

"So excited had I been, I failed to notice the room had other occupants. A merry laugh reached my ear. Turn-

ing, I saw several gentlemen who were present at the dinner party. They came forward, each grasping my hand cordially, and apologizing for their suspicions. The story was told many times after, and afforded considerable amusement. And after a while I could join in the laugh; but for a long time it was a very sore subject.

"Now, Alice, love, rest easy. I'll answer for Gerald. We will hear from him before long; just as soon as he has made the discovery. Come, smile, now; and— Ah, there is the dinner bell. I cannot have a clouded face near me. It will take away my appetite."

Alice tried to smile, but it proved a poor apology for one.

They were just about entering the dining-room, when a servant met them, holding out an envelope, saying:

"A telegram, sir."

Quickly opening which, Mr. St. James exclaimed joyously:

"Ah, I knew it! It is from Gerald."

It was from Peterborough, addressed to Mr. St. James, and read:

"Took, by mistake, an article of value from your house. Will return with it by the next train."

"Bless the boy! How could you have doubted him, Alice? *You*, of all others! I can scarcely forgive you," her father said, affectionately chiding her.

Alice's face was radiant with smiles then, and she whispered in her father's ear:

"Gerald will."

A few hours more and young Clifton was with them, and the port-monnaie restored to the owner. The event served to bind more firmly the affection of Mr. St James

to his favorite, who, in a year after, became his son-in-law and in time, not only fulfilled the great expectation of St. James, but quite reconciled Mrs. St. James to the fact of Alice's husband bearing no lordly title, but one won by his own merit. And that worthy lady has been more cautious in pronouncing so decidedly upon the actions of *literary* folks, since the event of the missing port-monnaie and the hearing of her husband's story; and she is often heard to say now, that "deep thinkers, who are nearly all the time planning the future, cannot be expected to be anything else than absent-minded. In fact, it is a positive proof of a great mind."

THE FLOWERS' WORK.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"SEE, mother! I've finished my bouquet. Isn't it beautiful? More so, I think, than those made by the florist which he asked two dollars for, and this has cost me but seventy-five cents."

"Yes, yes, it is very pretty. But, dear me, child, I cannot help thinking how illy we can spare so much for such a very useless thing. Almost as much as you can make in a day it has cost."

"Don't say *useless*, mother. It will express to Edward our appreciation of his exertions and their result, and our regards. How he has struggled to obtain a profession! I only wish I could cover the platform with bouquets, baskets and wreaths to-night, when he receives his diploma."

"Well, well; if it will do any good, I shall not mind the expense. But, child, he will know it is from you, and men don't care for such things coming from home folks. Now, if it was from any other young lady, I expect he'd be mightily pleased."

"Oh, mother, I don't think so. Edward will think as much of it, coming from his sister-in-law, as from any other girl. And it will please Kate, too. If *we* do not think enough of him to send him bouquets, who else could? Rest easy, mother, dear; I feel quite sure my

bouquet will do much good," answered Annie, putting her bouquet in a glass of water.

She left the room to make her simple toilet for the evening.

Mrs. Grey had been widowed when her two little girls were in their infancy. It had been a hard struggle for the mother to raise her children. Constant toil, privation and anxiety had worn heavily on her naturally delicate constitution, until she had become a confirmed invalid. But there was no longer a necessity for her toiling. Katy, the elder daughter, was married; and Annie, a loving, devoted girl, could now return the mother's long and loving care. By her needle she obtained a support for herself and mother.

Katy's husband held a position under the government, receiving a small compensation, only sufficient for the necessities of the present, and of very uncertain continuance. He was ambitious of doing better than this for himself, as well as his family. So he employed every spare hour in studying medicine, and it was the night that he was to receive his diploma that my little story begins.

The exercises of the evening were concluded. Edward Roberts came down the aisle to where his wife and Annie were seated, bearing his flowers—an elegant basket, tastefully arranged, and a beautiful bouquet. But it needed only a quick glance for Annie to see it was not *her* bouquet. Although the flowers were fragrant and rare, they were not so carefully selected or well chosen. Hers expressed not alone her affection and appreciation, but *his* energy, perseverance and success.

"Why, where is my bouquet? I do not see it," asked Annie, a look of disappointment on her usually bright face.

"Yours? I do not know. Did you send me one?" returned her brother-in-law.

"Indeed I did. And such a beauty, too! It is too bad! I suppose it is the result of the stupidity of the young man in whose hands I placed it. I told him plain enough it was for you, and your name, with mine, was on the card," answered Annie, really very much provoked.

"Well, do not fret, little sister; I am just as much obliged; and perchance some poor fellow not so fortunate as I may have received it," answered Edward Roberts.

"Don't, for pity's sake, let mother know of the mistake, or whatever it is, that has robbed you of your bouquet. She will fret dreadfully about it," said Annie.

All that night, until she was lost in sleep, did she constantly repeat:

'I wonder who has got it?"

She had failed to observe on the list of graduates the name of *Edgar Roberts*, from Ohio, or she might have had an idea into whose hands her bouquet had fallen. Her brother Edward, immediately on hearing Annie's exclamation, thought how the mistake had occurred, and was really glad that it was as it was; for the young man whose name was so nearly like his own was a stranger in the city, and Edward had noticed his receiving *one* bouquet only, which of course was the missing one, and Annie's.

Edgar Roberts sat in his room that night, after his return from the distribution of diplomas, holding in his hand Annie's bouquet, and on the table beside him was a floral dictionary. An expression of gratification was on his pleasant face, and, as again and again his eyes turned from the flowers to seek their interpreter, his lips were wreathed with smiles, and he murmured low:

"Annie Grey! Sweet Annie Grey! I never dreamed

of any one in this place knowing or caring enough for me to send such a tribute. How carefully these flowers are chosen! What a charming, appreciative little girl she is! Pretty, I know, of course. I wonder how she came to send me this? How shall I find her? Find her I must, and know her."

And Edgar Roberts fell asleep to dream of Annie Grey, and awoke in the morning whispering the last words of the night before:

"Sweet Annie Grey!"

During the day he found it quite impossible to fix his mind on his work; mind and heart were both occupied with thoughts of Annie Grey. And so it continued to be until Edgar Roberts was really in love with a girl he knew not, nor had ever seen. To find her was his fixed determination. But how delicately he must go about it. He could not make inquiry among his gentlemen acquaintance without speculations arising, and a name sacred to him then, passed from one to another, lightly spoken perhaps. Then he bethought himself of the City Directory; he would consult that. And so doing he found Greys innumerable—some in elegant, spacious dwellings, some in the business thoroughfares of the place. The young ladies of the first mentioned, he thought, living in fashionable life, surrounded by many admirers, would scarcely think of bestowing any token of regard or appreciation on a poor unknown student. The next would have but little time to devote to such things; and time and thought were both spent in the arrangement of his bouquet. Among the long list of Greys he found one that attracted him more than all the others—a widow, living in a quiet part of the city, quite near his daily route. So he sought and found the place and exact number. Fortune favored him. Standing at the door of a neat little frame cottage he beheld a young girl talking with two little children. She was not the blue-

eyed, golden-haired girl of his dreams, but a sweet, earnest, dove-eyed darling. And what care he whether her eyes were blue or brown, if her name were only Annie? Oh, how could he find out that?

She was bidding the little ones "good-by." They were off from her, on the sidewalk, when the elder child—a bright, laughing boy of five—sang out, kissing his little dimpled hand:

"Good-by, Annie, darling!"

Edgar Roberts felt as if he would like to clasp the little fellow to the heart he had relieved of all anxiety. No longer a doubt was in his mind. He had found his Annie Grey.

From that afternoon, twice every day he passed the cottage of the widow Grey, frequently seeing sweet Annie. This, however, was his only reward. She never seemed at all conscious of his presence. Often her eyes would glance carelessly toward him. Oftener they were never raised from her work. Sewing by the window, she always was.

What next? How to proceed, on his fixed determination of winning her, if possible?

Another bright thought. He felt pretty sure she attended church somewhere; perhaps had a class in the Sabbath school. So the next Sunday morning, at an early hour, he was commanding a view of Annie's home. When the school bells commenced to ring, he grew very anxious. A few moments, and the door opened and the object of his thoughts stepped forth. How beautiful she looked in her pretty white suit! Now Edgar felt his cause was in the ascendency. Some distance behind, and on the other side of the street, he followed, ever keeping her in view until he saw her enter a not far distant church. Every Sunday after found him an attentive listener to the Rev. Mr. Ashton, who soon became aware of the presence

of the young gentleman so regularly, and apparently so much interested in the services. So the good man sought an opportunity to speak to Edgar, and urge his accepting a charge in the Sabbath school. We can imagine Edgar needed no great urging on that subject; so, frequently, he stood near his Annie. In the library, while selecting books for their pupils, once or twice they had met, and he had handed to her the volume for which her hand was raised. Of course a smile and bow of acknowledgment and thanks rewarded him,

Edgar was growing happier, and more confident of final success every week, when an event came which promised a speedy removal of all difficulty in his path. The school was going to have a picnic. Then and there he would certainly have an introduction to Annie, and after spending a whole day with her, he would accompany her home and win the privilege of calling often.

The day of the picnic dawned brightly, and the happy party gathered on the deck of the steamer. The first person who met Edgar Roberts' eye was his fellow-student, Edward Roberts. Standing beside him were two ladies and some children. When Edgar hastened up to speak to his friend, the ladies turned, and Edward presented:

"My wife; my sister, Miss Grey."

Edgar Roberts could scarcely suppress an exclamation of joy and surprise. His looks fully expressed how delighted he was.

Three months had he been striving for this, which, if he had only known it, could have been obtained so easily through his friend and her brother. But what was so difficult to win was the more highly prized. What a happy day it was!

Annie was all he had believed her—charming in every way. Edgar made a confidant of his friend: told him what Edward well knew before, but was wise enough not

to explain the mistake—of his hopes and fears; and won from the prudent brother the promise to help him all he could.

Accompanying Annie home that evening, and gaining her permission for him to call again, Edgar lost no time in doing so, and often repeated the call.

Perhaps Annie thought him very fast in his wooing, and precipitate in declaring his love, when, after only a fortnight visiting her, he said:

"Annie, do you like me well enough, and trust in me sufficiently, to allow me to ask your mother to call me her son?"

Either so happy or so surprised was Annie, that she could not speak just then. But roses crowded over her fair face, and she did not try to withdraw the hand he had clasped.

"Say, Annie, love," he whispered. She raised her eyes to his with such a strange, surprised look in them, that he laughed and said:

"You think I am very hasty, Annie. You don't know how long I've loved you, and have waited for this hour."

"Long!—two weeks," she said.

"Why, Annie, darling, it is over three months since I've been able to think of anything save Annie Grey—ever since the night I received my diploma, and your sweet, encouraging bouquet. Since that night I've known and loved you. And how I've worked for this hour!"

And then he told her how it was. And when he had finished, she looked at him, her eyes dancing merrily, and though she tried hard to keep the little rose-bud of a mouth demurely shut, it was no use—it would open and let escape a rippling laugh, as she said:

"And this is the work my bouquet went about, is it? This is the good it has done me—" She hesitated; the roses deepened their color as she continued: "And you—"

"Yes, Annie, it has done much good to me, and I hope to you too."

"But, Edgar"—it was the first time she had called him thus, and how happy it made him—"I must tell you the truth—I never sent you a bouquet!"

"No! oh, do not say so. Can there be another such Annie Grey?"

"No; I am the one who sent the bouquet; but, Edgar, you received it through a mistake. It was intended for my brother-in-law, Edward!"

"Stop, Annie, a moment. Are you sorry that mistake was made? Do you regret it?" said Edgar, his voice filled with emotion.

"No, indeed. I am very glad you received it instead," Annie ingenuously replied; adding quickly: "But, please, do not tell Edward I said so."

"No, no; I will not tell him that you care a little more for *Edgar* than *Edward*. Is that it? May I think so, Annie?"

She nodded her head, and he caught her to his heart, whispering:

"Mine at last. My Annie, darling! What a blessed mistake it was! May I go to your mother, Annie?"

"Yes; and I'll go with you, Edgar, and hear if she will admit those flowers did any good. She thought it a useless expenditure."

The widow Grey had become very much attached to the kind, attentive young man, and when he came with Annie, and asked her blessing on their love, she gave it willingly; and after hearing all about the way it happened, she said:

"Never did flowers such a good work before. They carried Edgar to church, made a Christian of him, and won for Annie a good, devoted husband, and for me an affectionate son."

ONE TRUE HEART

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

A PLEASANT, gentle-looking girl was seated under the shade of a great oak-tree. There was a wistful look in her brown eyes, as she followed the form of a handsome, dashing-looking fellow going down the path, with a brilliant little beauty hanging on his arm.

"Oh, I wish it was time to go! I just hate picnics," she was saying to herself, when lounging, careless and free, came Tom Howard, and said:

"Everybody here has paired off but you and me, Miss Grayson. Oh, I'm not going to call you so. My sisters call you Annie, and I think I might. You are tired, I see, and the day not half spent. Come! I'm going to try and make myself agreeable, and perhaps the hours may be endured until the going home time comes. Now, Annie, I know what you were thinking about when I came up."

Annie shook her head, and said:

"Indeed you do not."

"Very well, if I'm right, you will own up?"

A smiling assent from Annie.

"You were hating picnics, because a certain handsome fellow is devoting himself to a would-be belle!"

Annie blushed so deeply that Tom said:

"That's all right. I have a knack of reading looks. I'm glad you are not an acknowledged beauty, Annie. I

detest having to talk to such girls. One has got to keep, while with them, the same look of admiration on his face, and neither see nor hear anybody else. It is really good to have a sensible girl to talk to."

"Indeed, I'd just like to be as pretty as Miss Oakley! Just see how Harry keeps beside her." Annie's lips quivered just a little then. Ah, she had let her secret slip out.

Tom felt as if he would enjoy giving Harry Cleveland a good thrashing. He felt sure he had been trifling with the gentle girl's heart. But Tom thought changing the conversation would help matters just then.

"Have you ever spent a winter in town, Annie?"

Annie never had; but said:

"I would like to, ever so much."

"Katie has mother's commands to either bring you, or the promise of your coming before Christmas," Tom said. "And, then, I'll promise you the gayest time you ever had."

On and on Tom talked, telling of the "time" they had last season, and relating anecdotes and jokes, so that, notwithstanding an occasional sigh, when Harry came in sight, Annie was surprised when some one called:

"The boat is coming!"

Tom managed to catch Harry alone on the way home, and say:

"Cleveland, since I've been visiting down here I've heard your name connected with Miss Grayson's. Now, I want to know if I will be trespassing on somebody else's ground?"

"No, indeed; not *mine*. Annie is the dearest little *friend* in the world. That's all. Possibly in time there is no knowing but I might have been *rash* enough to—well—ah!—excuse me, there is Miss Oakley, beautiful and rich. Good-evening. You have my best wishes."

"The consummate puppy. He is not worthy of her. Never mind. My name's not Tom Howard if I don't change his tune in less than six months."

Annie Grayson and Tom Howard's sister were schoolmates. A sweet, simple, country girl was Annie, never having been farther than the little town of P——, where the seminary was.

Harry Cleveland had been visiting an uncle in the neighborhood for a few weeks, during which time he had amused himself with the gentle little Annie.

And she, poor girl, thought her heart must break when Harry left her to follow in the train with Miss Oakley's admirers.

Annie's father was only a "well-to-do farmer." And it cost him a considerable effort to give his daughter a suitable fit-out for a winter in town; but Annie had grown so sad he was glad to let her go. Annie had not entirely cast Harry from her heart. Some little hope of seeing him and winning him back lingered still when she arrived in B——.

What Tom had been doing I cannot just tell, but somehow, to Annie's immense surprise, the evening of her arrival she found herself surrounded by a half dozen very pleasant young gentlemen, each one seeming to vie with the other in attentions to her. Engagements for the opera, concert and lectures were made for her. In a few words, in less than a week after she reached B——, Annie Grayson was an acknowledged belle. No one called her a beauty. But one raved over her "bronze eyes;" another, her charming *naiveté;* a third, her sylph-like form. An artist friend of Tom's wanted to paint her picture. He, of course, knew true beauty. That was enough. It was the fashion to have De Vere paint one's portrait; and so, in a few weeks, Annie Grayson's picture was on exhibition

in De Vere's studio. One would hardly have credited the change those weeks had wrought in the simple country girl, and for the better too. She was not spoiled at all—only pleased and happy. She grew very easy and graceful in her manner. Her eyes were brighter, and laughing. She had gotten entirely over the wound made by Harry Cleveland, and was heart-whole and free for a while. Frequently she met Miss Oakley with Harry, but no longer she sighed for her beauty. Once or twice he had called, but finding Annie always with pleasant company, troubled himself no further. What it was that first drew so many admirers around Annie, Tom knew best; but no one wondered that she endeared herself to all who knew her.

Whispers were afloat that Miss Oakley's riches were in the oil regions, and after a while that no oil was there, consequently no riches for her. What it was I can't say; but Miss Oakley went home to P——, and Harry did not follow. About this time Harry's aunt came to town, bringing to Annie many little remembrances from home.

Of course Harry came with her—and somehow managed to get in the way of dropping in occasionally, much to the disgust of some of Annie's more persevering suitors. Harry never could bear opposition. First, because he wanted to run others off; and, again, because Miss Grayson was "the fashion" then. Harry began again his love-making. Wooing the little rustic and wooing the calm, assured city belle were two different things.

Annie laughed at him, not believing, or feigning not to believe, a word he said. At length—in perfect desperation—Harry sought Tom, and begged his help.

"Cleveland, months ago I came to you. I would not have tried to win her from you. You told me to go ahead, I had your best wishes. I cannot understand this change—"

"Nor I, Tom. I only know I *love* her *now*—I do, upon my honor," said Harry.

"Has not the little piece of fun, the report of an uncle in India, whose heiress she is to be, had this powerful effect?" Tom asked, a contemptuous smile curling his lips.

"No, no. Of course I know better than that. You remember my aunt's intimate connection with her family. No, Tom, I *love* her—I'd marry her to-day, and work for her cheerfully all the days of my life."

"And Miss Oakley—"

"She—ah, well! I only *imagined* I was in love with her," Harry said, looking considerably embarrassed.

"Well, Cleveland, *I* am not one of Miss Grayson's suitors. If you can win her I shall not oppose you."

One after another of Annie's lovers had to content themselves with her friendship. Harry grew very hopeful, and Tom began to think his little game might not end just as he wished. He could resign her to any one sooner than to Harry Cleveland. There was one young fellow to whom Tom had confessed his joke concerning the India wealth. When he knew Annie was poorer than himself, he wooed her more earnestly. In every way he was worthy of Annie.

Possibly, for a chance to learn the true state of her heart, Tom went to plead another's cause.

"Annie, may I speak a word for Noble? Can you not learn to love him? Poor fellow! he quite worships you," Tom said, "and I wish—"

"I wish I was home again," Annie said; and, dropping her head, she sobbed like a grieved child.

"Why, Annie, how can you talk so? What has worried you? Everybody loves you. You ought to be the happiest girl in the world," Tom said, trying to soothe her.

"I don't want everybody to love me, and everybody don't love me," sobbed Annie.

"Oh, you unreasonable little girl! Six months ago *I* found your heart almost breaking for the love of just one. You wanted to be beautiful for his sake. And now that all you wished for is yours, you are not happy. What more can you wish?"

"I wish I'd never come to town! I wish I just *knew* I possessed the love of *one* true heart. What do I want with many?"

"Annie, I truly believe Harry loves you, if it is about him you are troubled. But I would sooner give you to Noble—"

She turned, with her eyes flashing. What she would have said was interrupted by Harry's entrance. Tom left the room. A half hour after, with a heavy step, the young man came forth, and joining Tom on the porch, said:

"It is all over with me, Howard. I would give years of my life to recall the last six months. *Then* I might have won her, and now she is lost to me forever!"

"Whom does she care for, I'd like to know?" Tom asked.

Harry shook his head sadly, and passed out a wiser man. Later that afternoon Tom found out.

"I wish I had tried to win her myself," he said. "I shall never love another so well. I wonder if her heart is free? I've a mind to try."

Annie, Tom's sister, and a little brother sat out on the porch watching the sunset, when the loud report of a gun was heard in the house. The little boy rushed in, and a moment after came flying back, crying:

"Oh, Tom is shot! Tom is killed!"

All ran in—all but Annie. Without a word she had

fallen to the ground. Ten minutes after, when they found her, she was still to all appearance lifeless.

It was so long before she opened her eyes that they had grown terribly anxious.

With a wild look at last she turned from one to the other. Then her gaze rested on one nearest to her. With a glad cry she put forth her arms.

Tom knew *all*, then, and kneeling beside her said, in a whisper low:

"My darling, my own, be *sure* of the love of one true heart. Are you satisfied with mine, love?"

"Are you hurt?" she asked, the warm blood returning to the pale face.

"Not the least, only upset by the shock. I would not have minded a considerable hurt for such a cure," Tom said.

And then, when they were alone, he asked again:

"Are you happy now, Annie?"

"Who would not be," she answered, "when sure of the love of one true heart?"

BY HIS OWN WORTH

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

HUGH ASHTON was dying; and his spirit fled before he could sign the will providing for Eddie, his little adopted son, that Dr. Martin drew up at the bedside. This pleased Mrs. Harden, the dead man's niece, who hated the little orphan.

The last offices had been performed, and Hugh Ashton slumbered beside his kindred dead, when Dr. Martin sought Mrs. Harden.

He apologized for his haste to converse on the subject, by telling of his immediate departure for England, to remain for years, possibly. He had come to speak of Eddie—of his adopted father's wishes and intentions, which were so nearly made legal. He hoped she would respect them, and, at any rate, do by Eddie as one of her own.

Mrs. Harden acquiesced in the doctor's suggestion with great cordiality, and completely disarmed any suspicions that dwelt in his mind relative to her feelings to Eddie.

Bidding the child good-by, the doctor gave him his address, and bade him write to him, and to consider him always his friend, and feel that he could claim his assistance in any way, should he need it. This address Mrs. Harden obtained, and kept to further her wicked intention.

The doctor had scarcely cleared the shores of his adopted country, when poor Eddie began to feel the need of a friend. Mrs. Harden no longer concealed her enmity, and the poor boy overheard a conversation between her and the housekeeper that decided his future.

"I shall return him to the asylum, his proper place. The idea of my supporting a pauper! Uncle's mind must have been very much affected when he took this boy to raise as his own," said Mrs. Harden.

"But your uncle loved him dearly, madam. You might respect his wishes, and give the child an education. Then he can take care of himself. It will come very hard on him to go back to that place now," said the woman, pleadingly.

"I am decided. He goes to-morrow!"

"Oh, mamma! please, mamma! Poor Eddie! Uncle loved him so dearly! Don't send him to that horrid place!" plead a little girl, who came forward, and, catching her mother's hand, looked beseechingly into her face. But she was sent off, with harsh words for her interference. And as the door closed behind the child, Eddie joined her in the hall, and whispered:

"Come with me, Lilly!"

They sought the garden, and there Eddie, after binding Lilly over to secrecy, told her he was going to run away that night. He would never return to the asylum. Lilly cried, and begged him not to; but finally agreed it would be better so. And when Eddie gathered together a few things, a change of clothing, some prized books, and one or two remembrances of the friend he had lost, Lilly came and slipped on his finger a ring, saying:

"Here, Eddie! This is my own; I can give it. Wear it always. I've put it on with a wish."

All was ready, and the poor boy had sobbed out his

parting words and turned away, a few steps only, when he ran back and said:

"Oh, Lilly, I have forgotten my knife—the last present of dear papa's. Get it for me. I fear to go back; I might be seen. You will find it in my drawer. Wrap it up and bring it to me, please. It is new; I have never used it. I want to keep it nice. Run, Lilly!"

It was late in the afternoon, almost dark; but Lilly, after a little search, found the knife, and, tearing off a leaf from an old book which she thought of no account, wrapped up the knife, and soon placed it in Eddie's hand.

Three years before, Eddie had been taken from the Orphan Asylum by Mr. Ashton, and adopted as his son. This action had dispersed the expectations of Mr. Ashton's niece, Mrs. Harden, who had always looked on her little daughter Lilly, who was a great pet of her uncle's, as the heiress of all his great wealth. Mrs. Harden, as might be supposed, had no kind feeling for the boy.

Eddie was a manly, brave-hearted little fellow, although only twelve years old. Visions of success filled his mind, and when parting from Lilly he had whispered:

"I'll come back a great man, Lilly."

Poor child! He dreamed not of the suffering, temptation and sin that lurked everywhere in the world he was just entering.

For some days Eddie's courage remained firm; but after his few dollars were spent in obtaining food and shelter, and still he had failed to find either work or friends, he began to grow disheartened. When one after another of his little keepsakes were pawned for bread—everything but his one suit of clothes gone, then Eddie's heart sank. Daily he would repeat his prayer to be delivered from evil. He had some faint remembrance of his mother—of kneeling at her side, and repeating the prayer she taught

him. He had been given a Bible, an old worn one, by some friend, who had told him it was his mother's. But he had left that at the home that was his no longer. Sometimes he wished he had brought that with him.

"It might have helped me keep from sin," he said.

Six months had rolled away. No one would have recognized the pale, emaciated, miserably clad boy, as the handsome, bright-eyed Eddie of Ashton Grange. The winter days were growing terribly cold. Nearly forty-eight hours had passed then without food, and he had nothing to get it with. Lilly's ring had been carried to a jeweller's store and sold for fifty cents, the week previous. The purchaser was a kind-hearted man, and promised he would let him have it back, whenever he came for it. It was an awfully bitter night, and Eddie had sought a refuge in the depot, and hovered, shivering, near the stove, trying to hide from sight, fearful of being turned out. A while longer, and he had grown quite warm—but oh, so hungry! He must have bread—bread, or die!

A step was heard, and in an instant more a man entered and looked around, while Eddie drew closer in his hiding place. Moments passed on, and the poor boy's hunger grew more terrible. A groan escaped him. Starting forward, the man's keen eyes soon found him, and he drew forth the little sufferer and asked:

"Hallo! what's the trouble?"

"Bread! for God's sake, sir!" moaned the boy.

"Oh! that's it," the man said, eying the trembling boy closely.

"Bread! a *little* piece; and I'll work for you, do anything to pay you!"

A quick, pleased expression came into the man's eyes, and he said:

"Wait here. I'll give you bread in a few moments."

He went hastily out. Soon he returned, bringing with him bread, meat and a tin cup of coffee.

Eddie clutched wildly the food, and after having satisfied his terrible hunger, he turned to the man and said:

"I think you have saved my life, sir. Now, how can I thank you?"

The stranger told him that henceforth he should know no more suffering. He should be his son, in place of the one he had lost. He looked so sad, and was so kind, the child's confidence was soon won. And in a short time they were pledged to each other as father and son.

But after only a few days, Eddie grew uneasy. He did not like the appearance of things. His home was very different from what he had expected. Miserable-looking men, who were in the house all day, and out all night, were the associates of the man—Mr. Mandeville, he said was his name. And to explain his manner of living, he told Eddie he was a detective, hunting out a great case, which, if he succeeded, would make his fortune. Then he said that Eddie could do his part.

He carried the poor boy to a spacious and elegant house, and told him that he must go there with some flowers, and while he was waiting in the hall for the lady for whom the flowers were intended, he must get the impression of the lock. On and on the tempter went. Not content with his own villany—forgetting or disregarding the remembrance of his own days of innocence—he strove to drag down to perdition the poor boy. But Eddie was bright enough to see through the *ruse* then. He said he could not, and stuck to it—resisting alike bribery and threats—until at length he was tried by hunger again. Worn to emaciation —so weak that he had no longer strength to resist—he yielded, saying to himself:

"What matters it now how I die? If I am detected I shall be put in prison. That is better than my present

life. There are no friends on earth for me. And when I die—" Here a dreadful thought came to him: "To die in such sin as he was contemplating then!"

The tears gathered in his eyes, and trickled down his pale cheeks. He put his hand in his pocket to find his apology for a handkerchief. He had been provided with an overcoat, which covered his ragged suit. In vain he hunted the pockets; nothing could he find. So at length he tore out one of his tattered jacket pockets to answer his purpose. As he drew it forth, a little roll of crumpled paper fell to the ground. He stooped, picked it up, and smoothing it out, found it was the title-page and blank leaf of a small Bible.

The boy's eyes grew larger. Earnestly he gazed on the leaf, on which was written a few lines. The muscles of his face began to twitch, and his bosom to heave convulsively, as he read the magic writing:

"To Eddie, from mother. I shall watch and pray for your coming! Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

He had reached the house where he had been directed. Sinking down on the carriage step, he re-read the message which had just reached him from his angel mother.

A fearful struggle was raging in Eddie's breast. Should he resist the evil? Suffer the torture of hunger, die and go to his mother? Oh! it was a terrible death! Or should he fulfil his promise, get rich, and go back to Lilly? Yes; he must live! "Live by sin?" conscience whispered.

He tried to pray for guidance, but, poor boy! he was so weak and weary he could scarcely hold up his hands in supplication. And the words of his prayers he could not recall. Only again and again the cry, "Lord, help me!" escaped his lips, as he sank down and dropped his head on the hard, cold stone. A minute, five perhaps, passed, and then his head was raised, a holy light beamed in his eye, and he said:

"I can die, but I will not sin! Mother, mother, help me!"

Just then he saw, a short way off, his tempter coming.

He rose up, and tried to run. Only a few steps were gained, when he fell into the outstretched arms of a kind motherly-looking woman.

"Mother, save me!" he cried, scarce conscious of what he was saying, and fainted.

The cry, the words, found a response in the woman's heart.

"Thank you, madam, for your kindness, but I will relieve you of my son," said the tempter, with a pleasant smile and a courteous bow, as he came forward.

But the woman was a shrewd, quick-witted one, and looking keenly at the man, she said:

"I am not sure he is your son. May be he is, may be not! Come on to the station and prove property, and then take it. He is afraid of you, sure."

Now the "station" was just the place the man was not anxious to appear anywhere near: so muttering something about "taking other means," he moved quickly off.

Saved! saved! Yes, the Heavenly Mariner had moored the little sorrow-tossed bark in a safe harbor. Hester Foster's home was one of peace and plenty. And there she bore the starving boy.

When he was strong and well enough, Hester let him tell her all of his story—his past, and the life which she rescued him from. She wept over his trials, and the wonderful way he was saved from crime.

"Oh! how came that leaf from mother's Bible in my pocket? Sometimes I think the angels must have slipped it there. My Bible is home—I mean, where I once called home!"

"Angel! Yes, it was that little Lilly you've talked so much about. She, the blessed child, must have wrapped your knife in that leaf. Child! child! God is good! How

wonderful are His ways! Your salvation was through that little Lilly's hands!" said the quick-thoughted Mrs. Foster, after she knew all. And so it was Lilly's thinking the old book of no account, that Eddie's mother's dying prayer was brought to him at the needed time.

One year more, and Mrs. Foster went in, from her country home, to the great city. And with her Eddie, to get back Lilly's ring.

The jeweller was true to his word; the ring was waiting for him. But the good man told him he would have to detain him until he sent for a gentleman who was very anxious to find the boy who owned that ring. He told Eddie he had nothing to fear. The gentleman was a friend he knew. But the poor boy was uneasy until, after a half hour had elapsed, the messenger returned, and with him Doctor Martin!

Oh, what a joyous meeting it was! He told Eddie he had recognized the ring, as one he had given Lilly. He knew all Mrs. Harden's cruelty, and for months had been seeking to find Eddie.

The good doctor would have taken him home then, as his own son, but Mrs. Foster plead so hard to keep him, that it was agreed that Eddie should return with her, and attend a very good school near by.

For five years it was so. Then Doctor Martin took him under his own charge. And in five more years the doctor had an assistant, who was likely soon to supplant him in the favor of all his patients.

All these years dear little Lilly had thought of her playmate, and wondered why he never came. Many tears she wept for him.

Misfortune seemed to have devoted herself, with continual and never failing attention, to Mrs. Harden. Losses by fire, banks failing, and worst of all, her son's vices had reduced her to real poverty. Their beautiful home had

long since been sold, and everything else was gone. Lilly, who was then eighteen, supported herself and mother by giving music lessons. Verily "the way of the transgressor is hard," and Mrs. Harden felt it, and in agony groaned over her misfortunes.

Lilly confidently believed Eddie would return some day; and so he did. When the "old homestead" was again for sale, Doctor Edwin Worth was the purchaser.

"Back again! I *knew* you would come!" exclaimed Lilly, when Eddie had clasped her to his heart. "When I put my ring on your finger, that was the wish, and has been my prayer ever since."

"My guardian angel! I have come back for your love, Lilly!"

Then he told her of his trials, his temptations, and miraculous escape.

"Now, my Lilly, will you not put your hand in mine, and promise to go with me, back to our childhood's home? Mine now—not willed, but won!"

"By *Worth*, truly!" Lilly said, with a merry little laugh, which immediately gave place to a sad expression, and she whispered:

"But mother—"

"Is forgiven—freely, fully. Our home shall be hers. And now, darling, with your dear hand clasped in mine, I am glad it was *as it was*. Deeply I feel it was for the best; for now I can truly sympathize with such as I was once. I will give thanks to God for His mercy, by works of kindness to his needy and erring ones. Our united efforts will be in this cause, my Lilly, and we have a wide field of action."

"We will enter it, Eddie, feeling confident that victory will crown the efforts of all whose work is for the love of God and his fellow-man!"

A LITERARY WIFE.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"MORNING, noon and night—all the time reading and idling about! What a shameful, yes, wicked waste of time! Oh, I declare, I shall not be surprised if, one of these nights, the ghost of some one, or every one, of my industrious, hard-working ancestors came to warn me of my danger. Oh, I must get over this indeed! Such a wife would ruin any man less than a millionnaire. Thank Heaven, I have not committed myself; but there is no denying I do like Louise Hobart better than any girl I ever knew. And I think she is really charming. But I've seen what a terrible misfortune a lazy wife is to a man, in our own family. Jack's wife has pretty near ruined him. Well, I'm glad I can get over this; but it will come kind of hard; I've spent the evenings so pleasantly with Louise. How well she does talk! Any man might be proud of her. But talking won't make the pot boil. And a poor Government clerk might need a wife who could help not only to make his pot boil, but to put something in it too."

Just here Charley Fulton's thoughts and steps were arrested by some one catching hold of him, and exclaiming:

"Stop! Hold on, Fulton! What's up? You are going ahead at such a mad rate, I could hardly catch up to you. Are you trying to escape the Evil One?"

"May be I am," returned Charley, with more meaning in his words than his friend Ned Wilmer knew. "I did not know I was travelling so fast, however."

"Yes, I saw you when you came out of Mr. Hobart's. Rather an early call, Charley?" his friend said, inquiringly.

"Yes; I only called to invite Louise to the concert to-night, but she is engaged—"

"Yes, old fellow, I was before you this time," Ned said, smiling pleasantly; then putting his arm through Charley's, he added: "I have wanted an opportunity to talk to you, Fulton. We have so long been friends, I should regret very much that anything should interrupt our kindly intercourse."

"Why, what do you mean? I can imagine no cause—"

"Charley, yes. You like Louise Hobart, I believe?"

"Yes, very much."

"And so do I. More than this, I shall win her, if possible," Ned Wilmer said, looking at his friend as though he expected and was prepared for some fierce demonstration.

"All right! Go ahead. My dear boy, I shall not feel any the less kindly if you succeed. Indeed you have my best wishes for your success," Charley answered, extending his hand.

"What! you are not really in earnest? Surely, you must have felt differently, or why have you been such a constant visitor there?" Ned Wilmer asked.

"I'll tell *you* just what I was telling myself when you came up. I do like Louise very much. She is really charming. But, Ned, she is not the girl for either you or me. You know how very idle, yes, and wasteful she is. Think how much time, yes, and money too, is lost so. Poor clerks should choose girls who will *help* them, not be a burden such as I fear Louise will prove. Now you

know just what it is that makes me so calm at the prospect of another winning her."

"You are wise, perhaps. I know Louise's failing—I suppose we must call it—but I can't resist the love which increases every hour I am with her. If I can win her I shall. So let me have the coast clear, and I will thank you."

"Oh, come, don't banish me so suddenly. Let me drop in occasionally. I cannot resign the pleasure of her society entirely just yet. I must come to it gradually. I declare I would sooner listen to Louise's talk than go to any opera, theatre or lecture; yes, or eat the best dinner that ever was cooked. But you know, Ned, *that* gift is not going to make a home comfortable or happy."

"I only know that I love her," answered Ned.

Just at that moment Charley raised his hat to a lady passing, remarking, when she was out of hearing:

"That girl, I am sure, will make the man happy who may be so fortunate as to win her. At school she was the most industrious little body I ever saw. Even during the recreation hours she was always working at something. She is just my idea of what a woman should be."

"Well, I wonder you have not tried to win the prize," Ned Wilmer said.

"I believe I should, but for— What shall I say? Not the superior attractions of another—nor the brilliancy. But all is not gold that glitters, you know. Well, we part here. Good-morning."

Ned Wilmer's heart was lighter than for many months. He had greatly feared Charley Fulton would win the girl he loved. And now that he had good hope of securing the one, and retaining the friendship of the other, he was in a very happy state of mind.

That night Charley called on Annie Warner, the young girl of whom he had spoken so highly that morning.

Although he found other company, Annie's fingers were as busy as her tongue; indeed, more so: the latter often rested, the former never, even when entertaining friends.

Never were girls more dissimilar than Louise Hobart and Annie Warner: the one brilliant, sparkling, and really gifted; but—well, of her failings, as the young men agreed to term them, enough has been said.

Well assured was Charley Fulton that from such, Annie, gentle, sweet little Annie Warner was free. No one ever found her idling her time over old books, or new ones. She was the tidiest little housekeeper; could make the best bread, nicest and lightest pies, puddings and cakes; was the most skilful seamstress—in fact, knew everything except what Charley thought was perfectly useless, and he said:

"What is the good of a woman knowing all about every book and its author, from the very first that was ever written to those of the present time? I truly believe Louise Hobart does. If a man wants a history, biography, or encyclopædia, he can buy them—not get a wife that is a combination of all. I pity poor Ned!"

During the evening a circumstance occurred which really decided Charley's future.

Annie's father came in, bringing a box wrapped and securely tied. Handing it to Annie, he said:

"A present for you, daughter."

Her eyes sparkled with pleasure as she thanked him and began to untie the cord. The knots were stubborn, resisting her efforts.

Charley pulled out his knife, and her brother said:

"Oh, cut it, Annie. We are all eager for a look."

"So am I," she answered. "But it will be too bad to waste such a nice string; it will do to use again."

After at least five minutes spent in picking and pulling,

the knots loosened. Annie wound up the cord, secured the end, and laid it aside. Then the paper was taken off and nicely folded, for future use, too, before Annie opened the box.

"That girl is the one for me. No fear of her proving other than a helpmate," Charley said, gazing with admiration on Annie, who drew from the box a beautiful seal-skin muff and tippet.

As Charley's mind reverted again to this incident, another was remembered which proved conclusively to his mind the wasteful disposition of Louise.

One evening, a few weeks previous, while Charley and Ned Wilmer sat listening to a poem Louise was reading, a playful kitten found its way into her work-basket, and was not discovered until half a dozen skeins of silk and as many spools of cotton were dragged about the floor, and in such a condition that it would have taken some skill and a great deal of patience to untangle the threads.

Louise looked at the mass a moment, then, clipping away the spools, threw the snarled bunches into the fire, saying:

"Pshaw! I could read half a dozen chapters, or spend the time in thinking, which is next best to reading, that it would take to untangle that. I won't waste so many precious moments."

Inwardly Charley congratulated himself on his escape.

After one or two more visits to Louise, which strengthened his belief that she would make poor Ned rue the day he married her, if he should do so, Charley devoted himself earnestly to his wooing; Ned Wilmer doing likewise.

At the end of six months both were married to the girls of their choice. Calls were exchanged between the brides, and occasionally, at long intervals, after. But as there was but little congeniality, there could be no intimacy.

Ned Wilmer was very warmly attached to his friend, and would drop in for an hour in the evening, two or three times a year. Thus four years were passed.

Ned Wilmer came in one evening, and after watching Louise, who as usual was absorbed in a book, said:

"I'm just from Fulton's."

"Indeed!" Louise said, closing her book, and asking, "How are they? Is Mrs. Fulton just such an industrious little body as ever? Come, tell me all about them. I see from your eyes you have lots of news."

"No, not much news. I found them well, and Mrs. Fulton busily engaged with a new sewing machine. I wonder you have not wanted one, Louise. Charley is very anxious I should purchase one for you."

"I don't want it. I detest them. I don't care a snap for ruffles, tucks, puffs, and such fixings, for myself; and I'm not going to get the children up in that style. I want to cultivate their taste for something higher than the latest fashions—"

"But I should think it would be a source of amusement," interrupted Ned.

"No, indeed, I'm not going to spend *my* leisure hours over a sewing machine. After the necessary work is done, your wants and the children's attended to, you know—I always have near me the best amusement in the world, *I* think," Louise answered, holding up her book.

"Yes, dear, I know. But what does your reading profit your family?"

Louise's face flushed quickly, and her husband hastened to add:

"I am perfectly satisfied, dear. You do all I care to have you, as long as I keep my office and good health. But both are uncertain. Now Charley tells me *his* wife makes sufficient to dress herself and the children by her

machine—stitching for a few friends. She can easily make twenty dollars a month just by working a few hours in the evening."

Louise's lip curled as she repeated:

"Twenty dollars! Working away health and strength that should be saved for her children's sake, for twenty dollars a month!"

"Louise, I would not consent to have you do so. But, dear, suppose Charley and I both should lose our offices, which family would likely suffer the least?"

"I don't know anything about what Charley Fulton's family would do; but I *do* know *yours* would not suffer for anything."

"How could it be otherwise?" Ned asked.

"I would not let either you or yours," Louise answered, her face glowing brightly.

"*You*, child! What could you do, except to love us with your whole heart, and read and talk? Oh, if either of those would pay, wouldn't we be rich, love?" Ned said, raising her face and kissing the pouting lips.

"Yes, good reading does pay, just as well as good feeding. It has improved my mind, and I can write books myself," Louise answered, with sparkling eyes.

"You write, Louise! Well, perhaps you might, if you would try—"

"*Might!*" she said, interrupting him. "I *have* written stories, and they have been published, and paid for, too. I have never told you this, because I know many gentlemen have a horror of literary women. Since my marriage my time has been devoted to you and our little ones. I have seen no necessity for my using this gift or talent, therefore have husbanded my strength for use when the time comes. Now, sir, if the test comes, you shall see if you have such a good-for-nothing wife."

Ned was too surprised to *say* anything for a few moments; but he did *look* at his wife, and with admiration quite sufficient to satisfy her.

It was not long before the test came. Charley lost his position by a change in the administration; and Ned Wilmer, after an attack of pneumonia, was left with a bronchial affection, which was considered so serious that his physician insisted he should go to Florida.

Then Louise went to work—*then* her husband and the world knew what she could do.

After the leave granted him by the department expired Louise insisted upon his resigning and remaining South. In a few months she went with the children to join him, and stayed for two years, until Ned was fully restored to his usual good health.

Bravely Charley Fulton's wife worked, too, doing no less than her husband had believed she could and would. But Louise! Charley Fulton could scarcely credit his eyes and ears. To do him justice, he would not have exchanged his own devoted and loving little wife for any other woman; yet he could not help the thought frequently entering his mind, when he so often heard Louise's praises, "Was he wise?"

EDNA'S SACRIFICE.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

IT was a cold night in September. For three days the rain had fallen almost unceasingly. It had been impossible for us to get out; and no visitors had been in. Everything looked dreary enough, and we felt so, truly. Of course the stoves were not prepared for use; and this night we (that is, Nell, Floy, Aunt Edna, and myself) were huddled in the corners of the sofa and arm-chairs, wrapped in our shawls. We were at our wits' end for something to while the hours away. We had read everything that was readable; played until we fancied the piano sent forth a wail of complaint, and begged for rest; were at the backgammon board until our arms ached; and I had given imitations of celebrated actresses, until I was hoarse, and Nell declared I was in danger of being sued for scandal. What more could we do? To dispel the drowsiness that was stealing over me, I got up, walked up and down the floor, and then drew up the blind, and gazed out into the deserted street. Not a footfall to be heard, neither man's nor beast's; nothing but patter, patter, patter. At length, after standing fully fifteen minutes—oh, joyful sound!—a coming footstep, firm and quick. My first thought was that those steps would stop at our door. But, directly after, I felt that very improbable, for who was there that *would* come such a night? Papa was up north with mamma;

Nell and Floy were visiting Aunt Edna and me, the only ones home, save the servants. Neither of us had as yet a lover so devoted or so demented as to come out, if he had anywhere to *stay in*.

On and past went the steps. Turning away, I drew down the blind, and said: "Some one must be ill, and that was the doctor, surely: for no one else would go out, only those from direst necessity sent."

A deep sigh escaped Aunt Edna's lips, and although partially shaded by her hand, I could see the shadow on the beautiful face had deepened.

Why my aunt had never married was a mystery to me, for she was lovable in every way, and must have been very beautiful in her youth. Thirty-six she would be next May-day, she had told me. Thirty-six seemed to me, just sixteen, a very great many years to have lived. But aunt always was young to us; and the hint of her being an old maid was always resented, very decidedly, by all her nieces.

"Aunt Edna," I said, "tell us a story—a love-story, please."

"Oh, little one, you have read *so* many! And what can I tell you more?" she answered, gently.

"Oh, aunty, I want a *true* story! Do, darling aunty, tell us your own. Tell us why you are blessing our home with your presence, instead of that of some noble man, for noble he must have been to have won your heart, and—hush-sh! Yes, yes; I know something about somebody, and I must know all. Do, please!"

I plead on. I always could do more with Aunt Edna than any one else. I was named for her, and many called me like her—"only not nearly so pretty" was always added.

At last she consented, saying:

"Dear girls, to only one before have I given my entire

confidence, and that was my mother. I scarce know why I have yielded to your persuasions, little Edna, save that this night, with its gloom and rain, carries me back long years, and my heart seems to join its pleading with yours, yearning to cast forth some of its fulness, and perchance find relief by pouring into your loving heart its own sorrows. But, darling, I would not cast my shadow over your fair brow, even for a brief time."

With her hand still shading her face, Aunt Edna began:

"Just such a night as this, eighteen years ago, dear child, my fate was decided. The daughter of my mother's dearest friend had been with us about a year. Dearly we all loved the gentle child, for scarcely more than child she was—only sixteen. My mother had taken her from the cold, lifeless form of her mother into her own warm, loving heart, and she became to me as a sister. So fair and frail she was! We all watched her with the tenderest care, guarding her from all that could chill her sensitive nature or wound the already saddened heart. Lilly was her name. Oh, what a delicate white lily she was when we first brought her to our home; but after a while she was won from her sorrow, and grew into a maiden of great beauty. Still, with child-like, winning ways.

"Great wells of love were in her blue eyes—violet hue *he* called them. Often I wondered if any one's gaze would linger on my dark eyes when hers were near? Her pale golden hair was pushed off her broad forehead and fell in heavy waves far down below her graceful shoulders and over her black dress. Small delicately-formed features, a complexion so fair and clear that it seemed transparent. In her blue eyes there was always such a sad, wistful look; this, and the gentle smile that ever hovered about her lips, gave an expression of mingled sweetness and sorrow that was very touching. You may imagine now how beautiful she was.

"Her mother had passed from earth during the absence of Lilly's father. Across the ocean the sorrowful tidings were born to him. He was a naval officer. Lilly was counting the days ere she should see him. The good news had come, that soon he would be with her. At last the day arrived, but oh! what a terrible sorrow it brought. When her heart was almost bursting with joy, expecting every moment to be clasped in those dear arms—a telegraphic despatch was handed in. Eagerly she caught it, tore it open, read—and fell lifeless to the floor.

"Oh! the fearful, crushing words. We read, not of his coming to Lilly, but of his going to her, his wife, in heaven. Yes, truly an orphan the poor girl was then.

"In vain proved all efforts to restore her to consciousness. Several times, when she had before fainted, mother was the only physician needed. But that night she shook her head and said:

"'We must have a doctor, and quickly.'

"It was a terrible night. Our doctor was very remote. Your father suggested another, near by.

"Dr. ——, well, never mind his name. Your father said he had lately known him, and liked him much.

"Through the storm he came, and by his skilful treatment Lilly was soon restored to consciousness, but not to health. A low nervous fever set in, and many days we watched with fearful hearts. Ah! during those days I learned to look too eagerly for the doctor's coming. Indeed, he made his way into the hearts of all in our home. After the dreaded crisis had passed, and we knew that Lilly would be spared to us, the doctor told mother he should have to prescribe for me. I had grown pale, from confinement in the sick-room, and he must take me for a drive, that the fresh air should bring the roses back to my cheeks. Willingly mother consented. After that I often

went. When Lilly was able to come down-stairs, this greatest pleasure of my life then was divided with her. One afternoon I stood on the porch with her, waiting while the doctor arranged something about the harness.

"'Oh! *how* I wish it was my time to go!' she whispered.

"'Well, darling, it shall be your time. I can go to-morrow. Run, get your hat and wraps,' I said, really glad to give any additional pleasure to this child of many sorrows.

"'No, no, that would not be fair. And, Edna, don't you know that *to-morrow* I would be so sorry if I went to-day? I do not mean to be selfish, but, oh, indeed I cannot help it! I am wishing *every time* to go. Not that I care for a ride—" She hesitated, flushed, and whispered: 'I like to be with my doctor. Don't you, Edna? Oh! I wish he was my father, or brother, or cousin—just to be with us all the time, you know.'

"Just then the doctor came for me, and I had to leave her. As we drove off I looked back and kissed my hand to her, saying:

"'Dear little thing! I wish she was going with us.'

"'I do not,' the doctor surprised me by saying.

"I raised my eyes inquiringly to his. In those beautiful, earnest eyes I saw something that made me profoundly happy. I could not speak. After a moment he added:

"'She is a beautiful, winning child, and I enjoy her company. But when with her, I feel as if it was my duty to devote myself entirely to her—in a word, to take care of her, or, I should say, to care for *her* only. And this afternoon, of all others, I do not feel like having Lilly with us.'

"That afternoon was one of the happiest of my life. Although not a word of love passed his lips, I knew it

filled his heart, and was for me. He told me of his home, his relatives, his past life. Of his mother he said:

"'When you know her, you will love her dearly.'

"He seemed to be sure that I should know her. And then—ah, well, I thought so too, then.

"Lilly was waiting for us when we returned. He chided her for being out so late. It was quite dark. Tears filled her eyes as she raised them to his and said:

"'Don't be angry. I could not help watching. Oh, why did you stay *so* long? I thought you would never come back. I was afraid something had happened—that the horse had run away, or—'

"'Angry I could not be with you, little one. But I don't want you to get sick again. Come, now, smile away your tears and fears! Your friend is safe and with you again,' the doctor answered.

Taking her hand, he led her into the parlor.

"He had not understood the cause of her tears. Only for him she watched and wept.

"'*Do* stay,' she plead, when her doctor was going.

"He told her he could not, then; there was another call he must make, but would return after a while.

"She counted the minutes, until she should see him again. Never concealing from any of us how dearly she loved him. She was truly as guileless as a child of six years.

"From the first of her acquaintance with him, she had declared 'her doctor' was like her father. Mother, too, admitted the resemblance was very decided.

"This it was, I think, that first made him so dear to her.

"Several times, after the doctor returned that evening, I saw he sought opportunity to speak to me, unheard by others. But Lilly was always near.

"Ah! it was better so. Better that from his *own* lips I

heard not those words he would have spoken. Doubly hard would have been the trial. Oh, that night when he said, 'good-by!' He slipped in my hand a little roll of paper. As Lilly still stood at the window, watching as long as she could see him, I stole away to open the paper. Then, for a while, I forgot Lilly, aye, forgot everything, in my great happiness. He loved me! On my finger sparkled the beautiful diamond—my engagement ring—to be worn on the morrow, 'if I could return his love,' he said.

"Quickly I hid my treasures away, his note, and the ring—Lilly was coming.

"She was not yet strong, and soon tired. I helped her to get off her clothes, and as she kissed me good-night, she said:

"'I wish we had a picture of him—don't you?'

"'Who, dear?' I asked.

"'My doctor! Who else? You tease. You *knew* well enough,' she answered, as she nestled her pretty head closer to mine.

"Soon she was sleeping and dreaming of him. Sweet dreams at first I knew they were; for soft smiles flitted over her face.

"I could not sleep. A great fear stole in upon my happiness. Did not Lilly love him too? How would she receive the news which soon must reach her? Was her love such as mine? Such as is given to but one alone? Or only as a brother did she love him? I must *know* how it was. Heaven grant that joy for one would not bring sorrow to the other, I prayed. I had not long to wait. Her dreams became troubled. Her lips quivered and trembled, and then with a cry of agony she started up.

"'Gone, gone, gone!" she sobbed.

"It was many minutes ere I succeeded in calming and making her understand 'twas but a dream.

"'Oh! but *so* real, so *dreadfully* real. I thought he did not care for me. That he had gone and left me, and they told me he was married!'

"Telling this, she began to sob again.

"'Lilly, dear, tell me truly—tell your sister, your very best friend—how it is you love your doctor?' I asked.

"'How?' she returned. 'Oh, Edna, more than all the world! He is all that I have lost and more; and if he should die, or I should lose him, I would not wish to live. I *could* not live. He loves me a little, does he not, Edna?'

"I could not reply. Just then there was a terrible struggle going on in my heart. *That* must be ended, the victory won ere I could speak. She waited for my answer and then said, eagerly:

"'Oh, speak, *do!* What *are* you thinking about?'

"Pressing back the sigh—back and far down into the poor heart—I gave her the sweet, and kept the bitter part, when I could answer.

"'Yes, dear, I *do* think he loves you a little now, and will, by-and-by, love you dearly. God grant he may!'

"'Oh, you darling Edna! You have made me so happy!' she cried, kissing me; and still caressing me she fell asleep.

"Next morning I enclosed the ring, with only these words:

"'Forgive if I cause you sorrow, and believe me your true friend. I return the ring that I am not *free* to accept.'

"I intended that my reply should mislead him, when I wrote that I was not free, and thus to crush any hope that might linger in his heart. While at breakfast that morning, we received a telegram that grandma was extremely ill, and wanted me. Thus, fate seemed to forward my

plans. I had thought to go away for a while. I told mother all. How her dear heart ached for me! Yet she dared not say aught against my decision. She took charge of the note for the doctor, and by noon I was on my journey. Two years passed ere I returned home. Mother wrote me but little news of either Lilly or her doctor after the first letter, telling that my note was a severe shock and great disappointment. Three or four months elapsed before grandma was strong enough for me to leave her. An opportunity at that time presented for my going to Europe. I wanted such an entire change, and gladly accepted. Frequently came letters from Lilly. For many months they were filled with doubts and anxiety; but after a while came happier and shorter ones. Ah, she had only time to be with him, and to think in his absence of his coming again.

"When I was beginning to tire of all the wonders and grandeur of the old world, and nothing would still the longing for home, the tidings came they were married, Lilly and her doctor, and gone to his Western home to take charge of the patients of his uncle, who had retired from practice. Then I hastened back, and ever since, dear girls, I have been contented, finding much happiness in trying to contribute to that of those so dear. Now, little Edna, you have my only love-story, its beginning and ending."

"But, aunty, do tell me his name," I said. "Indeed, it is not merely idle curiosity. I just feel as if I must know it—that it is for something very important. Now you need not smile. I'm very earnest, and I shall not sleep until I know. I really felt a presentiment that if I knew his name it might in some way effect the conclusion of the story."

"Well, my child, I may as well tell you. Dr. Graham it was—Percy Graham," Aunt Edna answered, low.

"Ah! did I not tell you? It was not curiosity. Listen, aunty mine. While you were away last winter, papa received a paper from St. Louis; he handed it to me, pointing to an announcement. But I will run get it. He told me to show it to you, and I forgot. I did not dream of all this."

From my scrap-book I brought the slip, and Aunt Edna read:

"DIED.—Suddenly, of heart disease, on the morning of the 15th, Lilly, wife of Doctor Percy Graham, in the 34th year of her age."

Aunt Edna remained holding the paper, without speaking, for some minutes; then, handing it back to me, she said, softly, as if talking to her friend:

"*Dear* Lilly! Thank heaven, I gave to *you* the *best* I had to give, and caused you nought but happiness. God is merciful! Had *he* been taken, and you left, how *could* we have comforted you?" And then, turning to me, she said: "Nearly a year it is since Lilly went to heaven. 'Tis strange I have not heard of this."

"'Tis strange from him you have not heard," I thought; "and stranger still 'twill be if he comes not when the year is over. For surely he *must* know that you are free—" But I kept my thoughts, and soon after kissed aunty good-night.

One month passed, and the year was out. And somebody was in our parlor, making arrangements to carry away Aunt Edna. I knew it was he, when he met me at the hall door, and said:

"Edna—Miss Linden! *can* it be?"

"Yes and no, sir—both—Edna Linden; but, Doctor Graham, not *your* Edna. You will find her in the parlor," I answered, saucily, glad and sorry, both, at his coming.

Ah, she welcomed him with profound joy, I know. He knew all; papa had told him. And if he loved the beautiful girl, he then worshipped that noble woman.

"Thank God! Mine at last!" I heard him say, with fervent joy, as I passed the door, an hour after.

How beautiful she was, when, a few weeks after, she became his very own. I stood beside her and drew off her glove. How happy he looked as he placed the heavy gold circlet on her finger! How proudly he bore her down the crowded church aisle!

Ah, little Lilly was no doubt his dear and cherished wife. But *this* one, 'twas plain to see, was the one love of his life.

WHO WAS THE THIEF?

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

FRED LORING'S toilet was at length completed, and turning from the glass, he said:

"Well, I'm off now, Nellie. Good-by."

"At last! Excuse me, Fred, but just now quietness is more desirable than your society. It is impossible to get baby to sleep while you are flying about the room. She sees you, and wants to get to you," answered Nellie.

"All right. I'll get out of the way. By-by, baby."

And kissing the little one, Fred hurried out.

Ten or fifteen minutes passed. Baby was quiet at last, almost asleep, when the door opened, and in rushed Fred again. And up started baby, with a shout of welcome. An impatient look came into Nellie's eyes, and the tone to her words:

"Oh, Fred, I had almost gotten her to sleep. And now see! And I am so tired. What has brought you back so soon?

"Well, well, I'm sorry. But I left my revolver behind. I guess she'll soon be quiet again," Fred said, unlocking the drawer and taking out his revolver.

"Fred, I declare I never *did* see such a man. You cannot leave the house without being armed. Do you forget there is a law against carrying concealed weapons?"

"I *remember* to be on my guard, and prepared to defend

myself if it be necessary. Every day we read accounts of persons being robbed, knocked down, and such like. I tell you, Nellie, *sensible* persons go armed always."

"Perhaps, Fred. But I think the nervous and suspicious persons are more likely to. Indeed, I never like to see you carrying off your revolver. I'm in constant fear of something dreadful happening."

"But never in dread of any one murdering and robbing me. Of course not!" Fred snapped forth.

"Oh, Fred! You are so quick and suspicious of every one, that my great fear is you'll hurt the wrong person some time!" said Nellie, with a really anxious look on her pretty face.

"Indeed I am not aware of ever having gotten hold of the wrong person. I think you are calling on your imagination for facts, Mrs. Loring!" Fred said angrily.

"Now, Fred, to defend myself I shall have to point to facts. Do you forget catching hold of poor old Uncle Tom, and choking him so he could not explain he was carrying the clothes to his wife to wash, instead of being a thief, as you supposed? And—"

"And will I ever forget your handing me over to a policeman, for having attempted to pick your pocket in the street car?" exclaimed a bright, merry-looking girl, who entered the room during Nellie's attempt to defend herself from Fred's accusation.

"Oh, Fan, don't, for mercy's sake. I cry quarter. Two at a time is more than I can stand. And besides, I had hoped that you would not have exposed that miserable mistake!" Fred said, with a reproachful look.

"I intended to keep the secret. But really, Fred, I've been almost dying to have a good laugh with Nellie over it. And to-night the opportunity was too tempting to resist."

"Mercy, Fan! If you tell Nellie, I'll never hear the last of it."

"Oh, I must. It is too late to recede. Nellie will imagine it worse, if possible, than it really is. But I'll not prolong your agony. I'll be as brief as possible," said Fannie.

And amidst the cries of "Don't! don't!" and "Yes, do, do!" Fannie began.

"The day I reached here, just as I came out of the depot, I spied my beloved and respected cousin Fred entering the street car. I hurried up, and got in immediately after him. Even if my veil had been raised I could hardly have expected him to know me, as I have changed much in five years. As it was, my face was completely hidden. The car was much crowded, many standing—I next behind Fred. I was well laden with lots of little packages, so the idea struck me to drop a few into Fred's overcoat pockets. Without discovery I put what I wished into one, and was about slipping my porte-monnaie into the other, when my hand was caught with such a grip that I screamed right out. At the same time Fred exclaimed, 'Here is a pickpocket!" And of course there was a policeman there, as none was needed. I was too frightened to speak for an instant. At length I found voice enough to say to the officer, who was making his way toward me, 'The gentleman will find he is mistaken in a moment.'

"After the first fright, I was really amused, notwithstanding the mortifying situation. By that time Fred had drawn forth my porte-monnaie. Nodding to the policeman, he said:

"'An old dodge. Putting into my pocket what she has taken from some one else. Has any one here lost this?' he asked, holding up my porte-monnaie.

"No one claimed it. I managed to get off my veil then,

that I had been tugging at. I had gotten a lady in the depot to tie it tightly behind, as it was blowing a perfect gale when I arrived. All eyes were on me then, of course. And the officer, not recognizing an old offender, and not a very guilty-looking young one, hesitated. I looked eagerly at Fred, to see if he would not recognize me, but he did not. There was a very embarrassing pause then, that had to be ended; so I said, not trying to restrain my smiles:

"'If you will open that porte-monnaie, Mr. Loring, you will see my card. I thought my acquaintance would justify my loading you with some of my bundles. If you will notice, your other pocket is full.'

"Every one waited eagerly the result. Quickly Fred did my bidding. You may imagine his look, when he exclaimed:

"'Fannie Loring! Bless my soul, coz, can you ever forgive me? But how could I know you? I've not seen you since you were a child.'

"There was a shout of laughter heard then, in which Fred and I joined. But Fred's was not a very hearty laugh; and I think he was glad to get out of that car, for he made me walk at least three times as far as ever you and I walk when we leave the car."

Nellie was almost convulsed with laughter, which baby seemed to enjoy very much. And Fred exclaimed:

"It was not half as bad as you have made it out, Fan. And just for a punishment for your laughing so, Nellie, I hope baby will not go to sleep for hours. I'm off now."

Merry rippling laughter followed him. And Fred ran down the stairs, and out of the house, almost hoping somebody might attempt to rob, or murder him even, so that his revolver might prove of great avail, and thus silence Nellie, who was ever talking about what she called

his suspicious nature, when it was only necessary caution, he thought.

Soon baby was sleeping soundly, notwithstanding Fred's wish to the contrary. And Nellie, putting her into the crib, went to the bureau to arrange her hair.

"Why, Fred has gone without his watch!" she exclaimed. "I don't think he ever did that in his life before. I wonder he has not been back again before this!"

The hours passed swiftly by. Fannie, with her merry heart, fully compensating Nellie for Fred's absence. Eleven o'clock came before they imagined it near so late. And just then they heard the hall door close, and a moment after Fred entered the room, and in an excited voice exclaimed:

"Now, ladies, perhaps you will admit the good of carrying a revolver, when I tell you that to-night I have been robbed."

"Robbed!" exclaimed Nellie and Fannie simultaneously.

"Yes, robbed. But I did not stay so, many minutes, thanks to my revolver! Listen, and I'll tell you all about it. On my way home I turned Gray's corner into Fourteenth street. You know how dark and dismal it is about there—no lights. Well, as I turned, a fellow came rushing along, knocked against and nearly sent me down. And saying quickly, 'Excuse me, sir,' hurried on. I suspected what it was—a dodge they have when relieving a man of his watch or pocket-book. I hastened to feel for my watch. It was gone."

"Why, Fred, your watch—"

"Stop! Don't interrupt me. Wait until I've done."

The girls exchanged looks—mirthful first, anxious after.

"In a second I was after him. Presenting my revolver, I bade him hand me the watch. He resisted. I covered

him with my pistol, and spoke again in a tone which convinced him I was in a dangerous mood.

"'Hand me that watch.'

"Out it came; and without taking a second look at me, he left. And thanks to my little beauty here," tapping his revolver, "I am home again, no worse off than when I started. Now, what say you?"

"Oh, Fred! Oh, my dear, what have you done? Oh, you have robbed that man of his watch! Yours is on the bureau. You left it home," Nellie cried, in a voice of real agitation.

"What? No! Surely not!" exclaimed Fred, growing very red, and starting toward the bureau.

Fannie handed to Fred his own watch, at the same time fairly shaking with the laughter she had tried so hard to suppress.

"Oh, Fred, forgive me. I'm only human; I must laugh or die."

Peal after peal came from the merry girl, who could not restrain herself, although Nellie looked so reproachfully, and Fred really angrily at her; the former saying:

"Indeed, Fannie, I'm too much frightened to laugh."

Fred was too mortified to say another word for some time. At length, turning to Fannie, who had grown a little quiet, he snappishly said:

"Pray, don't stop! I'm very happy to afford you so much amusement."

Of course Fannie began anew; and Nellie trying to stop her by looks and motions, asked:

"What shall you do, Fred?"

"It is not a matter of such vital importance that you need look so worried, Nellie. I'll go to the police headquarters, explain the matter, and leave the watch. That will be the end of it," said Fred, trying to assume a light, careless tone.

Nellie hoped it might be the end of it; but still fearful of something unpleasant, asked:

"Is it too late to-night to go, Fred?"

"Certainly it is," Fred answered.

Seeing Nellie's face still retain its anxious and frightened expression, Fred broke out laughing himself, saying:

"You look as much frightened, Nell, as I imagine that man looked when I went for his watch."

Next morning Fred was longer than usual getting off from home, and all Nellie's urging haste seemed to have the tendency to retard instead of accelerating his motions. But at last, to her great relief, he was off. After getting a few rods from home, he drew forth the stolen watch, and found of course it had run down. Having no key to fit it, he approached a jewelry store, intending to have it wound up. He had failed to notice the very particular attention with which a policeman was regarding him. Just as he was about to enter the store, he was tapped on the shoulder. Turning, he beheld the officer, a total stranger to Fred, so he knew it was not a bit of use to explain the case to him. So to attract as little notice as possible, he walked quietly along with his not very agreeable companion until they reached the police head-quarters.

There he began his explanation. All were strange faces around him, on which he saw unmistakable signs of merriment when he said it was "a mistake." And to his immense surprise, after he had handed over the dreadful watch, and was turning to leave, he was made to understand he was a *prisoner*—the accusation, "Robbery and assault, with intent to kill!"

He sank on the bench for a moment, so overwhelmed with surprise and mortification that he could with difficulty collect his senses enough to know what to do. Just then a gentleman entered, and said to an officer near:

"I was surprised to hear you had caught the rascal so speedily. Where is the scoundrel? What does he say?"

"That it was all a *mistake!*" answered the officer, with a very significant smile. "There he is," pointing to Fred.

"Of course—the villain! And if I had been so unfortunate as not to have had a watch to hand over, he would have murdered and robbed me of what I might have of any value. The murderous rascal!—Ah! how are you, Loring? You here!" advancing and shaking Fred's hand cordially, and continuing, "Show me that cut-throat! Which is he?"

The expression on Fred's countenance may possibly be imagined, but I cannot describe it. And when, in answer to the call, "Prisoner, stand up," he arose, his friend's—the plaintiff's—surprise was stupendous for a moment; and then breaking into a hearty chuckle, he exclaimed:

"Of course *now* I know it was a mistake."

The dignity of the place was forgotten by all then, and never was such a shout of laughter heard before within those walls. But Fred could not join in it, to save him. He had too lately stood in the place of an individual bearing quite too many opprobrious epithets, to feel very light-hearted.

He returned home to relieve Nellie's mind, telling her it was all settled—she need have now no more anxiety about it. But he never told her how it was settled. One thing, however, she noticed—he was not so fond of his revolver's companionship as he used to be. And once she heard him say:

"If the law was more strenuous with regard to the carrying of concealed weapons, there would be fewer criminal indictments."

THE GHOST.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADER

PEEPING through the leaves of the vine-covered bower, and watching eagerly the path through the woods, was a beautiful little maiden. An anxious look was in her deep blue eyes, as pressing her hands over her heart, as if to stop its heavy beating, she said:

"Oh, why does he not come? How long a time! If he had good news, I know he would come quicker. Oh, I have not a mite of hope!"

The pretty lips quivered then, and she stepped back, and sank on the mossy seat.

A moment after a sound, slight as the dropping of leaves, caught her ear. She sprang up, and for an instant a bright light shone in her eyes, but quickly died away, as the slow, heavy step came nearer, bringing to sight a tall, noble-looking young man, whose face, if less stern, would have been very handsome.

Without speaking, he clasped her outstretched hand and drew her within his arms, shaking his head sadly.

"I felt it was so, or you would have come sooner," the maiden said, resting her head against his shoulder.

"I had little, if any, hope, Susie. I went this last time because you bade me to."

"What did father say, Frank?"

"Over and over the same old story of having, since your

babyhood, intended you to be the wife of his friend's son. Oh, if I were wealthier, it would be all right, I know," Frank said, his dark eyes flashing.

"Don't talk so, dear, please. I do not like to hear you impute a wrong motive to my father. I will never, never listen for one moment to any words of love from George Forrester, or any other man but you, Frank. So you may be sure, if papa will not let me marry you, I will never marry at all," Susie said, her eyes full of tears, looking up to his.

"Susie, I have made three appeals to your father during the year past; each time finding him, if possible, more determined to oppose our happiness. I will *never* humiliate myself again, and he will *never* yield. Now what will you do?"

"Wait, hope and pray. I can do nothing more," Susie answered, in a tearful voice.

"Yes, Susie, darling, you can, and secure our immediate happiness. You can come with me, be my own true wife, love."

"No—no—*no*. I *can*not. I should not secure our happiness. I should be miserable, and make you so."

"*Then* I have nothing more to hope for. He will not give you to me, and you will not come. Oh, Susie, how can you send me off? You know you are all the world to me! If I lose you, I lose everything. I am alone in the world. There are many loved ones to comfort your father, until he comes to his better nature and calls you back to his heart. Susie, am I to leave you forever?"

The beautiful dark eyes were looking into his, filled with so much love. How could she resist?

"No—no. I shall die, if you leave me—never to come again! Oh, what *am* I to do? I love you better than my own life, Frank, indeed I do! But, father—oh, how can I

desert him? He loves me more than the other children. I am the oldest, his first child, and so like what mother was. That is *why* he loves me so. And now *she* has gone, I *should* stay—"

"And break your heart and mine, too, Susie?"

"If I thought, Frank, you would not mind it very long—"

"You would give me up! And, in time, get into your father's way of thinking, and end by marrying the man he wants you to," Frank said, withdrawing his arm and turning away with a great sigh.

"Oh, Frank, how *can* you talk to me so?"

"Well, Susie, it is useless prolonging our sorrow. I had better say good-by, and go forever."

"No, no, Frank, dear love. Oh! what am I to do?"

"Be happy, my own, and make me so. Be my wife before I return to W——. Go with me. Susie, your mother loved me. I know, if here, she would plead for me."

"Yes, she loved you, and perhaps in her blessed home she will pity me, and win for me forgiveness, alike from heavenly as earthly father, if longer my heart cannot resist my love," Susie sobbed, dropping her golden head on her lover's bosom and promising all he wished.

"The last night at home," she said. "On the morrow I must go forth, to return no more, the loving, dutiful child. Should he ever consent to have me come back, I can never be again what I once was to his heart. I shall have broken the trust he held in me," Susie moaned.

Tenderly the brother and sister were ministered to, her hand resting on each little head, as their lisping voices followed hers in the evening prayer. Willie and Emma arose, their demure faces lifted to receive the good-night kiss. But Rosie, the two-and-a-half-year baby, the dying

mother's sacred charge, wound her tiny arms about the elder sister, and with baby-like perversity hung on, lisping:

"Now Susu pay, too. *Pease*, Susu. Do!"

The baby plead; and Susie, raising her eyes to Rosie's, felt mother, not far away, but near, *very* near, and pleading through her child.

The sunny head was dropped again, and Susie prayed —even as Rosie had begged her. Prayed for guidance to the better way.

Three pair of little pattering feet were resting. Three rosy faces pressed the downy pillow, and Susie's evening task was done.

Gently she stole away.

"I will go to father myself, to-night. I will plead with him until he must yield," Susie said, as cautiously closing the door of the nursery she entered her own room.

The evening was oppressive, and Susie's black dress became very uncomfortable. Flitting about, guided by the moonbeams, she sought for something of lighter texture. The mourning robe was laid aside, and a dress, white and fleecy, wrapped her slender form. The clustering ringlets were smoothed back, and rolled in a heavy coil high on the back of her head.

"Now I will go down. Father will be alone at this hour, and—" She paused, raised her sweet eyes upward, and clasping her hands she murmured, "Mother in heaven, plead for me."

Noiselessly she opened the door and glanced into the room. Her father sat with his back toward her, leaning on a table over which were scattered books and papers. In his hand he held the picture of her mother. She drew back a little, still, however, standing within the door. She dared not interrupt the sacred privacy of the hour

The rustle of her garments, light as it was, must have caught his ear, for his bowed head was raised.

"Mary! my wife! my own!" he cried, starting forward, with extended arms. "Thank God for granting me one glimpse of you again!"

Susie, awed and trembling, raised her eyes to see clothed as in life, the same sweet, gentle face, the rippling hair, caught back from the smooth, clear brow.

"Mother!" she breathed forth.

The room was lighted only by the moonbeams; but the vision was plainly seen. Another eager glance, and Susie stole away to her own room, and sank almost fainting into her mother's chair. A little while, and grown calmer, she opened her eyes, to see again, directly in front of her, the same vision.

She started forward, stretching out her arms, and calling softly, "Mother."

Nearer—nearer she drew, until, face to face, she stood beside the large mirror in front of which she had seated herself.

Unwittingly in one of her mother's dresses she had robed herself, and gathered her curls in the manner her mother was accustomed to.

"How very, very like her I am! Yes, now I know: father saw me in the mirror opposite which I stood. Well, I will not break his sweet delusion. I meant it not, Heaven knows. Oh, if mother could only come to him—in dreams, perhaps—to plead for me! I cannot desert him, I cannot; I *dare* not! But Frank—oh, how can I give him up! I will give up neither, but clinging to both loved ones, will trust to Heaven for a happy decision."

With this determination she sank to sleep, sweet and undisturbed.

Early next morning, as usual, she was in the breakfast-

room, ministering to the little ones clustering around her. The father's frown had lost its accustomed sternness, as he stood regarding his eldest child. A gentle, sympathetic light was in his eyes as they rested on the sweet face grown older, much, in those days of anxious care. How matronly she looked! So patiently listening to, and answering every wish of the little ones.

At last they were all satisfied; and Susie seeing, as she thought, her father deeply interested in the morning paper, stole away to the trysting-place.

"I cannot leave him, Frank. *Indeed, I never* can without his blessing resting on me. No, no!" she cried, as she saw the disappointed and stern expression of her lover's face. "I have tried, in vain, to make my mind up to it. How can I give up either? loving you both so well."

"You have trifled with me, Susie; you have broken your promise, too. You will, most likely, never see me after this morning, if I go from you. Are you determined?"

"Yes, dear, dear Frank, I am determined not to go unless father blesses and bids me go. I will trust my happiness to him, and God, who ruleth all things," Susie answered, looking very sorrowful, notwithstanding her faith.

"Then, good-by."

She raised her face, pale and pleading, to his:

"Kiss me good-by, Frank, and say, 'God bless me,' please," she whispered.

He did as she pleaded, but there was an injured air in his manner. As he parted from her, she sprang after him, crying:

"Forgive me, Frank, if I have wounded you. Know that to me it is worse. One little parting look of love, darling!"

"Oh, Susie, how can you?" He pressed her again to his heart, looked lovingly enough: but his eyes, as plain as words could, repeated Tennyson's lines:

"Trust me all in all,
Or not at all."

And, determined to make one more appeal, he said:

"Susie, darling! love! trust me for happiness. You will never repent it. Come!"

"No, no. Go!"

He turned off quickly, angrily then; and Susie sank, sobbing, on the grass.

"My daughter!"

She raised her eyes, heavy with tears. Beside her, with a sad but kind and gentle face, her father stood. With him, a puzzled, doubtful expression on his features, her lover.

"Oh, Frank, I am so—so glad to see you again!" she cried, with as much joy beaming in her eyes as though their parting had been for years.

"Yes; as it is so very long since you saw him last!" her father said, with a pleasant smile.

"I feared it would be for years, perhaps forever," Susie said, in a low voice, anxiously regarding her father, and longing to beg an immediate explanation of her lover's return.

"My daughter, what did you intend to do after sending off this young man? Be a dutiful child, and wed as I wish you?"

"Never, never, father! I intend to be dutiful only so far as not wedding against your wishes, that is all—to leave the future to God, only praying constantly that some blessed influence may be sent to change your mind and heart," Susie answered, raising her eyes to his, filled with earnest determination.

"Your prayers must have commenced already, my child. Some influence hath surely been sent—some blessed influence, I truly believe. Yes, my child, you will wed to please your father. Here, Frank, take her. I ought to scold you for trying to coax her from me. I heard it all this morning. But I forgive you for her sake, and bless you, too, boy, for the sake of the one in heaven who loved you. There, there, daughter, don't choke me with your kisses. Take her off, Frank, and make her happy. She is a good child, and will make a true and loving wife. God bless you both, my children!"

And so ended Susie's intended elopement.

THE TWO BROTHERS.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"AH here we are!" said a pleasant voice, as the driver, having jumped from his seat, opened the carriage door.

"Yes, sir, I think so. This is the street and number—244 or 246, which did you say?"

"'Pon my word, I've forgotten, and lost the card," answered the pleasant voice.

"The name, sir? I'll inquire."

"Never mind. I'll take a look at both houses, and see if I cannot decide. I'm earlier than expected, so I can look well before they come out to welcome me. Just dump my luggage down on the sidewalk, and make off for another job," said the old gentleman, handing the fare to the man, who soon after drove off.

"Well, here are two cottages alike, and very unlike, too. This one is Charley's home, I know. Why? Because it is newly painted. The fencing all in perfect order. The grounds, although very limited, are prettily fixed up. Flowers and vines—ah, I like the looks of this place! And I'm sure I'm right in fixing it in my mind as Charley's. Some don't-carish fellow lives there—loves his pipe, cigars and wine, may be, better than his home, wife and children. Dear, dear! how those blinds are suffering for a coat of paint! A few dollars would make that fence

all right. How different that entrance would look with a little rustic seat like this one! I wonder that fellow does not notice how much he might improve his place, if he only did as Charley. But here comes the servant. I'll get her to let me in."

"Rather sooner than you expected me, ain't it? Folks not up yet? Just go back and open the door, my girl; let me in, and then tell Mr. Charles Mayfield that his uncle has come!"

"Oh, sir, you mistake! It is *next* door Mr. Charles Mayfield lives," answered the girl.

"Next door? No; *you* mistake, surely. My nephew Charley can't live there!"

"Yes, sir. But his—" What the girl was going to say was stopped by a jovial voice in the next door, calling out: "Uncle, here! How are you?" And a moment more the pleasant old gentleman was caught by both hands and drawn along to the next house. His nephew Charley saying: "I'm so delighted to see you! Come in!"

Into the parlor he was carried, and seated in a very comfortable arm-chair. The interior was more inviting than the outside. It told very plainly that the wife did her duty toward making everything as nice as possible: in a word, making the best of her means.

A very short time after a sweet-faced little woman entered, and was presented by Charley, saying:

"Here is your niece, uncle."

The old gentleman received her welcome greeting by a return of real affection. His heart warmed immediately to his nephew's wife. She bore the traces of beauty which had been chased away by an over-amount of care, the uncle very soon felt sure. There was an unmistakable look of weariness and anxiety in her eyes.

Very soon Nellie, as Charley called her, excused herself,

and went out, saying she had a very inexperienced servant, and had to oversee and assist her in her work.

Breakfast was announced, which was one that Uncle Hiram enjoyed, notwithstanding the feeling which was uppermost in his mind, that the strong, fragrant coffee, the delicate rolls, and the steak which was cooked just as it should be, in a word, all that was so nice, was the result of Nellie's skilful hands. And she looked so tired and heated when she sat down to do the honors of her table. Again Uncle Hiram noticed that constantly her eyes wandered from the table to a door which entered the next room, which was partially opened. Her ear seemed strained to catch every sound. At length a little, feeble wail told the cause of her anxiety.

"Will you excuse me a moment, uncle?" she asked, and continued: "Our babe was quite sick all night, and I feel anxious about her."

A moment or so after Nellie withdrew, the servant came in, bringing a fresh supply of hot rolls. Then Uncle Hiram had a chance of seeing the help Nellie had with her many duties—a half-grown girl.

"Inexperienced, truly, inefficient and insufficient," said the kind old man to himself; and he made a note of that on the tablets of his heart.

Soon Nellie came back, looking much relieved, and said, smiling:

"She seems much better this morning. How these little ones fill our heart with anxiety! I was up with her all night!"

Down went another note on Uncle Hiram's tablets. Awake all night with a sick baby, and up cooking breakfast in the morning! No wonder her youth and beauty have been chased away, poor, weary, overworked mother!

"Who lives next door, Charley?" asked his uncle, after they had withdrawn from the breakfast-room.

"Why, I have a surprise for you—Henry lives there."

"Henry! Henry who?"

"Why, Henry Mayfield, my brother."

"No! Why, the last time I heard from him he was in St. Louis."

"Well, he is here now, and has been for five months. His wife's relatives are all here. And so he having been offered a position in the same firm with me, accepted it. We agreed to keep it as a pleasant little surprise for you."

"Well, I'm glad of it."

Just as Uncle Hiram said so the object of their conversation came in.

Henry Mayfield was not the jovial, merry fellow that Charley was, and not likely to be so generally a favorite. But there was an earnestness and determination in his bearing that inspired respect immediately.

"Come, uncle! Go in with me to see my wife and little ones," said Henry, after sitting and talking a while. "We have a half hour yet before business requires us, and then, if you like, we will go down town together."

Henry's parlor, into which he ushered his uncle, was furnished better than his brother's; but still it was not so prettily arranged—the "woman's touch" was not so plainly visible. Immediately Henry's wife came in to welcome her husband's uncle.

She was a bright little woman, not near so delicately featured as Nellie; but with a youthful, well-preserved look, an easy, quiet, peaceful air about her that made Uncle Hiram feel quite sure, if he stayed her guest a month, it would not put her out a bit. If any extra care or worry came, it was not to her. Some one else's mind and hands would have to overcome any difficulties.

"Henry, dear, have our boy brought in to see his uncle," she said.

"Ah, ha!" thought Uncle Hiram, "I see—the shoulders best able to bear the burden of family cares have it. Just as it should be!"

A few moments, and the baby-boy was brought in by the nurse and presented to the uncle. Baby, like his mother, looked happy and healthy.

When they were about leaving for down town, Uncle Hiram heard Henry say:

"Ada, please order the cook to delay dinner an hour to-day. I've business which will delay me so long."

"Very well," was the smiling reply.

"A cook and a nurse. That is why Ada looks so calm, healthy and happy. *Just* as it *should* be. Poor little, patient, over-worked Nellie! I *wonder* how it is, both having equal means. I must find out what the trouble is," said Uncle Hiram to himself.

Now, Charley was not a drinking man, his uncle felt sure. He knew, indeed, that when he first grew to manhood he had vowed never to touch rum in any form.

The dinner at Charley's was better, if possible, than the breakfast. It was a real treat to the old bachelor, whose life was spent in a boarding-house, to partake of such good, healthy fare as Nellie gave him. But always he felt like partaking of it under protest. Nellie—little, weary, tired Nellie—ever filled his mind and heart. At dinner Charley brought forth his *ale*, declaring it to be "the very best in town." And after dinner his cigars, "none finer to be found," he said.

Now, Uncle Hiram could partake of both without serious disadvantage either to his health or purse. But caring very little for either, he seldom used them. During the evening several gentlemen friends came in to

call on Charley's uncle, and again ale and cigars were put out.

Uncle Hiram went to calculating. Ale, fifty cents, at least, that day; sometimes less, sometimes more. Make the average half as much—twenty-five cents. Cigars always as much; frequently, as *that* day, treble the amount. In a month it would sum up, to the very lowest, fifteen dollars. And who could tell how much more? What would not that money, worse than lost, have secured for Charley's wife and children?

Rest, health, peace and length of days, most likely.

Now, Uncle Hiram knew well enough how it was Charley did not have things beautiful without and around his premises, and why Nellie's weary mind and tired hands could not have help and rest.

But, next, he must find out how it was that with Henry things were so very different.

The following day Uncle Hiram dined with Henry. Everything was excellent and well cooked; and Ada sat at the head of the table, with an easy, quiet grace, which perfectly relieved Uncle Hiram's mind from any care for her. He knew very well Ada's husband sought in every way to relieve her of all unnecessary care and anxiety. After dinner came tea and coffee—nothing more. When they retired from the table Henry said:

"Uncle, would you like a cigar or pipe? I'll get you one in a few moments, if you say so."

"And will you join me?" asked his uncle.

"I do not use either. I care not for the weed, and think it better not to cultivate a taste," answered Henry.

"You are right, my boy—and how about wine or ale?"

"Nothing of the kind, uncle."

"Total abstinence, is it, Henry?"

"Yes, sir."

"I knew you were a temperate man, as is Charley. But he takes his ale, I notice," said Uncle Hiram.

"Yes, I wish he did not; a man has no idea how such little things, as he thinks them, draw upon his purse."

"I know, I know!" said Uncle Hiram. And he no longer wondered at the difference in Charley's and Henry's style of living. And so he had a good talk with Charley, and showed him how Henry, with the same salary, could keep two servants and beautify his home, and he not be able "to keep his head above water," to use his own expression.

"Yes, my boy, the cause is just this—the difference between *temperance* and *total* abstinence. You'll try it now, will you not, for your wife's sake?" said Uncle Hiram.

"Indeed I will, sir, and with many thanks to you for opening my eyes," answered Charley, who really loved his wife, but was thoughtless, and never for a moment had considered himself at all responsible for Nellie's failing health, strength and beauty.

When Uncle Hiram's next visit was made, he saw, before he entered the house, that Charley had kept his word. And when Nellie's joyous greeting was sounding in his ear he knew then that all was "just as it should be" with Nellie, as well as Ada. And the grateful little wife knew to whom she was indebted for the happy change, and blessed Uncle Hiram for it.

WHAT HE LEFT.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"I know not of the truth, d'ye see,
I tell the tale as 'twas told to me."

MARK BROWNSON was dying, slowly, but surely, so the physician told his wife, and advised that if he had any business to settle, it should not be delayed.

"He is sinking, and even now I see his mind is, at times, a little clouded. However, I suppose there is nothing of importance that he should consider," said the doctor.

"He has made no will," said Mrs. Brownson.

"Is that necessary? I did not know—"

"I think it is very necessary, doctor, for his children's welfare. Not that I think it at all likely there can be any contest about what Mr. Brownson has. Yet to provide against any future troubles, it would be prudent, I think."

The good doctor assented, but looked much surprised.

And well he might. No one imagined old Mark Brownson had anything to will. But he was a very eccentric man; and the economical style of his establishment was likely one of his notions.

"Are you suffering much pain now, Mark?" asked Mrs. Brownson, a few moments after, when she was seated at her husband's bedside.

"Yes, yes; give me my composing draught—the opium—anything to relieve me," answered the suffering man.

His wife obeyed, and after his groaning and restlessness had ceased, she said:

"I want to talk to you, Mark. Can you listen now?"

A nodded assent gave her permission to proceed.

"Do you not think it would be as well for you to express your wishes with regard to the disposition of your stocks and other effects? You may outlive me, Mark, and this thing not be necessary, still I think it better to attend to such business," said Mrs. Brownson, closely watching the effect her words might have on the sufferer.

She had feared possibly they might shock him severely, but depending much on the favorable influence of the opiate, she had ventured on the business she considered so important.

A look of satisfaction replaced the anxiety of a moment before. She had no longer cause for fear. Calmly Mark Brownson heard her suggestion, and said, in a feeble voice:

"What have I to will?"

"Why, dear, you forget. Your long sickness and the opium—no wonder! There is the stock in the 'Liverpool Steamship Company,' and that in the 'Australian Mining Company.' Surely you have not forgotten your large amount in our State bonds? And how much you have in 'Fire and Life Insurance stock' I cannot just remember now. However, by reference to the papers I can tell."

Again she watched her husband's face. It only expressed a rather puzzled brain, as though he was trying to remember.

"You have such papers? I cannot think," he said.

"Don't try to, dear. It is not necessary. I will just look over your papers, and make a statement; and when

I read them over to you in presence of the lawyer, you can assent. You wish an equal division between myself and our daughters, I know. Is it not so?"

"Yes, yes. You are always right," murmured her husband.

"There, dear, go to sleep now. Some time when you are easy we will fix this," said Mrs. Brownson.

And the next day, at an hour when she knew her husband's mind was best prepared, a lawyer was summoned, and a statement of stocks and bonds to the amount of two hundred thousand dollars placed before him, and Mark Brownson expressed his wish to have an equal division of his effects made between his wife and two children.

The will was made, and duly signed and witnessed by two of the nearest neighbors and the only domestic, a worthy woman who had been with Mrs. Brownson for many years.

A few days more, and Mark Brownson had passed from earth.

Many wondered at the very quiet and unostentatious style of the last services for him; but the widow had said:

"In death it shall be with him as he always preferred in life."

And then when all was over, and the summer months were coming, Mrs. Brownson sold out the modest little establishment, and, with her daughters and their faithful servant, went to board by the seashore, at a very fashionable resort; but, of course, not to mingle in the gay festivities of the season, only to recruit her health, which was very much impared by long attention to her suffering husband, and to have the girls escape the heat and dust of the city.

A few days after they were settled in their new abode Mrs. Brownson said to her attendant:

"Margaret, you were very much surprised by hearing Mr. Brownson's will."

"Oh, yes, ma'am, indeed I was."

"Well, Margaret, I do not wish you to mention anything about it down here. Mr. Brownson, you know, never let it be known to the world. And so it must be for the present. I do not wish my daughters to be married for anything but their own good qualities. They are good and beautiful enough to marry well, without having any other inducements for suitors. Now, Margaret, you know just how I feel, and what I mean?" said the anxious mother.

"Certainly I do! And I feel as much concerned about my beautiful young ladies as you do, ma'am. Never fear but I will look out for their interest," answered the worthy woman.

And to do as she said, to the best of her understanding, Margaret set out for a walk on the beach, with some of the other servants and their escorts, the waiters from the hotel. And before the next noon it was well known what a good chance there was for two young men to win as beautiful wives as ever were seen, to say nothing of the other greater attractions.

And very soon the sisters, Maud and May, were objects of universal observation. Yet it was very difficult to get an introduction, the young gentlemen all found; for the widow kept the beautiful girls very much secluded.

Numberless were the delicate attentions paid them, in the way of bouquets, books, and so on, sent by Margaret; and several cards to Mrs. Brownson, with the request for an introduction, accompanied by references—among which came those of Vernon Wadsworth and Harry Bennett.

The first one Mrs. Brownson knew well by reputation. He was a young physician of very fine promise, and, being

of one of the best families in the State, she considered him worthy of her attention. The other, she had heard since her arrival there, was the possessor of a very fair amount of worldly goods, the life-long accumulation of an old miser uncle. So, from the many aspirants, Mrs. Brownson selected these two to present to her daughters.

Just at this time, Doctor Alton, Mrs. Brownson's friend and the physician who had attended her husband, arrived at the sea-shore; and through him, without any more trouble or waiting the mother's pleasure, young Doctor Wadsworth obtained an introduction, and presented his friend, Bennett.

And although both of these young men did their best to keep back all others by various manœuvres, many more became acquainted with the lovely sisters, who soon, much to their own surprise, became decidedly the belles of that resort.

Carefully Mrs. Brownson had guarded her secret from her girls, fearing, perhaps, it would have a prejudicial effect, changing their sweet, unassuming manner, which was one of their greatest charms; or, perhaps, for other motives best known to herself.

Although Doctor Wadsworth and young Bennett very much feared the approach of other suitors, it was quite needless, for the girls were best pleased with the first who had sought them and drawn them forth from their seclusion.

The older one, Maud, a brilliant brunette, received with undisguised pleasure the devoted attention of Harry Bennett; while gentle little May, so fair and timid, always greeted the handsome doctor by a rosy flush suffusing her beautiful face; and then, from a shy, quick glance from the eyes, that had drooped at his approach, he would see the glad light that told how welcome his coming was.

"We must win them now, doctor; you see how much they are admired and sought here. What will it be when they are out of their mourning robes and in the gayeties of the city? This is our best chance. What say you?" asked young Bennett, a fortnight after their introduction.

"Say! That the very idea of even losing *sight* of that gentle, beautiful May for a day, fills my heart with misgiving and great anxiety. I tell you, I began this affair rather in fun—"

"You mean *after funds*, perhaps!" interrupted Bennett.

A flush suffused Doctor Wadsworth's face for an instant, and he answered:

"Well, I'll admit that is not at all objectionable; but really, now that I know May Brownson, I would not be willing to resign her to another man, even if she had not a dollar in the world."

There was an expression about Harry Bennett's mouth that looked as if his lips wanted to say: "I don't believe you"—only they did not just dare to. Harry Bennett was as much in love as he could be with any one other than himself, still he was not going to leap without looking. So, after learning a little more than he had already heard from Margaret, he was called, very urgently, to the city. After an absence of only two days he was back again, and stated to Doctor Wadsworth his knowledge of Mark Brownson's possessions. That evening Mrs. Brownson received proposals for both of her daughters.

She must consider the matter, and consult with her friends, the prudent mother thought and said to the anxious suitors.

This made them each more determined to secure the prize.

"Dear May, plead with your mother for me!" said the ardent young doctor.

"Mamma will consent after a while," answered the gentle girl.

"After a while! Why not now? I am going away next month for a long time. I cannot leave you, May. Would you wish me to?"

May turned pale at the thought, and raised her pleading eyes to her mother.

It was enough. Doctor Wadsworth had used the surest weapon. A separation was dreaded by both mother and daughter, and each for different reasons. And then it was an easier thing for Harry Bennett to obtain the mother's consent, to claim his love at the same time.

Mrs. Brownson, after giving her consent, requested a private interview with her prospective sons-in-law. The girls were sent from the room, and then Mrs. Brownson said:

"I have thought possibly, gentlemen, that a very foolish rumor may have reached your ears respecting the wealth possessed by my daughters, and that—excuse me, but I must allude to it—this may in a measure have influenced your selecting them from the many young girls here—"

"Oh, madam!" both men exclaimed simultaneously.

"If I tell you they have nothing but their pure hearts and loving natures, will you not be disappointed?"

"No, madam. How can you judge me so?" exclaimed both.

"I am glad it is so. I would not have you marry my daughters under false impressions."

"When May is mine, I shall think I have secured the most valuable fortune any man can have," said the doctor, with a really honest look in his eyes.

"When Maud is mine, I shall *know* I have secured *all* I would wish," added Harry Bennett, with rather a sly twinkle in his eyes.

And so it was agreed that they should be united there, and after a very private wedding leave for an extensive bridal tour.

"The old fox! Is she not a sly one? She thought to throw us off, I do believe. But *I* am as bright as she," said Harry Bennett, after the interview.

"Really, Bennett, that is not a very respectful way of speaking of the mother of your promised wife," replied Doctor Wadsworth.

"Well, no; you are right. But just to think of her talking so to us!" answered Harry, with an air of injured pride.

The ceremony was over. After an acquaintance of less than six weeks, Doctor Wadsworth and Harry Bennett had won their wives.

And while the brides had retired to change their dress for the travelling-suit, the happy young husbands requested to speak a moment with their mother-in-law.

"Indeed *you* must speak; I will not," said Doctor Wadsworth, in a low tone, as he closed the door, and with Bennett approached Mrs. Brownson.

After a moment's hesitation, Harry Bennett said:

"Now, Mrs. Brownson, that we have proved our sincerity and real love for your daughters, there is no reason for any longer concealment."

"About what, sir?" asked his mother-in-law.

"Come, my dear madam; this is entirely useless. You have tried and proved us. Now to business."

"Really, Mr. Bennett, I am at a loss to understand you! Will you please to be explicit?"

"Well, madam, then I must tell you that I am perfectly well aware that my wife is entitled to the one-third of two hundred thousand dollars left by her father. Now, my dear madam, we are going on a very long and expensive

trip, and may need more than I have in ready money. Now, that is just the whole truth," said Harry, who had gotten over his slight embarrassment, and then spoke in a very business sort of manner.

Not so Doctor Wadsworth; he seemed very much mortified, and looked as if he wished he was away from that scene.

"Mr. Bennett, I spoke to you about this report, and told you how false it was, did I not?"

"Oh, yes, madam; but you see—"

"You still believe this, even when I again tell you that neither I nor my daughters have a dollar in the world beyond the small amount I have now from the sale of my household effects? I assure you, sir, I speak the truth," said Mrs. Brownson, in a tone and manner that would have enforced belief.

But Harry Bennett said, triumphantly:

"Madam, I have seen Mr. Brownson's will."

"*That* will, my dear sir, is not worth the paper it is written on. Mr. Brownson was out of his *head*, and *imagined* he was possessed of that sum in bonds and stock. If you can find any such possession, no one would welcome it more gladly than I. You can readily prove the truth."

Harry Bennett gazed bewildered from his mother-in-law to Doctor Wadsworth, and then said in a low voice, as if to himself:

"Caught and caged."

"And I am glad of it," exclaimed the doctor, who was truly glad of anything to end that very embarrassing interview. "Come, Bennett, we must arrange our trip to suit the extent of our purse, and be happy with the prizes we have won."

"Well, madam, I must say that the old gentleman's will

was worth something. For I'll own up now, it helped very much to secure you *one* very nice young man for your son. I'll speak a word for him, although he has been *done up to a very Brown son!* I'm ready now, Wadsworth, and we won't shorten our trip one mile; for *I've* got a fortune, thanks to my old uncle. Yes, and *another*, I'll have to admit (there she is now), thanks to her father's will."

Mrs. Brownson could not resist a smile. She had no misgivings about her children's future happiness. If they had not already secured their husbands' affection, she knew they would soon; for who could help loving such lovely girls!

KATIE'S FISHING.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"OH, dear, I am so tired, so *very* tired! toiling all day, and often half the night, for barely enough to keep soul and body together. I must endeavor to find something that pays better than this ceaseless stitching. Four long weeks, and I've made less than twenty dollars. But here comes mother; I must chase away this weary look."

Notwithstanding the smile which welcomed Mrs. Ashley's entrance, the mother could not fail to see that her little Katie was looking really miserable. Six months' constant confinement had made a manifest change in the merry, rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed girl. So young a heart to be burdened with much care! No wonder smiles had fled and roses paled under it.

Mr. Ashley had been a government clerk, and lived up to every cent of his slender income; just managing to keep up a genteel appearance, and send Katie to an excellent school, intending to fit her for a teacher. But ere this was accomplished, Mr. Ashley died suddenly, and the little family were left entirely destitute. Mrs. Ashley was an invalid; she could help in no way to support her little family. So poor Katie, when only sixteen, was forced to leave her studies and put her shoulder to the wheel. A sewing machine was purchased, and bravely she went to work.

At the time of Mr. Ashley's death, many of his friends came forward with assistance. Katie was assured that she should get a position in one of the departments. Some of the most influential of her father's friends went to work for that purpose. But up to the time our story commences, Katie had nothing to encourage the hopes raised.

Mrs. Ashley gazed in silence for some time on her child, her heart filled with alarm at the change a few months had made. At length she said:

"Katie, love, this will never do. You must not work so constantly. Get your hat and go take a walk. And, my child—" She hesitated. "Well, I've been thinking that possibly, if you would try yourself, and not depend on friends, you might get a position. I should think General Looms, if he knew you, would give you work. He knew your father well. Go and ask him, Katie."

"Oh, mother, it would not be a particle of use. I do not believe he would look at me a second time. You know I am not handsome, and I have nothing about me to produce a favorable impression at first sight. Folks like me after they know me. But General Looms would never care to know *me*, when he has so many beautiful women about him all the time."

"Kate, you have no confidence in yourself. You are so sensitive and retiring. I'm sure, if you would only make yourself known, and tell our necessities to General Looms—"

"What about the general, mother? I know him by sight, and to speak to a little. And he is a fine old gentleman, I think," said Walter Ashley, a boy of ten years, who had entered the room and caught the last part of his mother's remark.

"How, or rather where, did you meet him, Walter?" asked Katie.

"Why, I see him most every afternoon up where we go fishing. Well, it would do you good to see him when he has fine luck. I believe he would sooner draw up black bass than greenbacks," Walter answered.

"Oh, Walter, some time when he is in such a good humor, could not you tell him who you are, and ask him to give me something to do?" Katie asked, in a tone and manner half serious, half in fun.

"Now, as if he would mind what a boy said! No, Katie, you come and go with me. Ladies often come up to the fishing-ground. Yes, indeed, they do! Then when he looks pleasant enough, you ask him yourself," said Walter.

"Oh, I never could muster up sufficient courage."

"Well, come with me anyhow. I am going now. Perhaps, when you see him, you'll find that he is not such a frightful somebody," Walter urged.

"Yes, do, dear. I think Walter's idea is very good. Go, at any rate. The change will do you good."

"Yes, mother, I'll go and try to ask him. I feel truly I cannot stand this constant confinement very long," Katie said, then putting aside her work and preparing to go with Walter.

They were soon after on their way to the fishing-ground. When in sight of the place, Walter said, "The general is not there, but he will come by-and-by, I guess. I'm glad we are first. I'll get a good position."

Thinking only then of the sport he was after, the boy busied himself with his tackle. Soon his line was dropped, and a few moments after, Katie saw him draw it up, with a triumphant exclamation.

"What a beauty! Oh, there comes the general. Ain't I glad he didn't get here before? He would have caught this. Now, watch him, Katie, I must to business. I'm going to have a brisk time, I think."

Then, in a lower tone, as the general came near, Walter said:

"He will come right up here beside you, I guess, for he most always sits just about here."

Katie raised her eyes to the approaching form timidly an instant—but an instant only; for surely there she found nothing to encourage a longer gaze.

General Looms looked decidedly cross. And the expression changed not for the better during the two hours the poor girl sat and watched.

"No, no," she thought. "There is nothing about him to bid me speak."

Then at last, tired and disheartened, she coaxed Walter to return home.

"What luck?" asked Mrs. Ashley, meeting them at the door.

"Splendid! See what a feast!" exclaimed Walter. He had quite forgotten the real purpose of Katie's going.

"Oh, Walter, mother means something of more importance than your fish," Katie said, with a reproachful look at Walter, adding, "No good luck for me, mamma. I could not dare to speak to him. He looked awfully cross."

"Well, that's so. He did. I never saw him so before. But the fish did not bite for him. I guess that was the reason," said Walter.

"No. He looked cross and annoyed when he first came in sight. I noticed particularly," Katie answered.

"I'm sure I cannot imagine why. Only I never saw him in such a humor before. But don't give up, Katie. Try again. Something, either at the office or home, must have annoyed him. Of course you nor I had anything to do with his cross looks," said Walter.

"I will try, but I have not the faintest hope of success," Katie answered, in a tremulous voice.

Day after day, when Walter returned from school, she would put aside her work and accompany him, returning to the anxious mother ever with the same despondent look on her pale face.

Twelve days passed thus. To Walter it was beyond comprehension. He declared that always before the general looked pleasant, sometimes he was really jovial, and on two or three occasions had spoken with much kindness to him.

"I declare, Katie, it is the strangest thing I ever knew. From the time he comes in sight, he looks cross, and grows more so until he or we leave," Walter said.

"Then I will not go any more. I believe I must have something to do with his changed humor."

"Oh, nonsense, Kate. I never meant to imply anything of that kind. Of course, as I told you before, neither you nor I have anything to do with it. Come on. The change from sitting over this old machine is good for you; so come. If the general never smiles again, we won't care," Walter said. And Mrs. Ashley urged:

"Yes, do. This will be the thirteenth time. Some people say that is a fatal number. With me it has ever been different. Go. I am sure something will turn up this afternoon. I feel it."

"Something! Well, anything will be better than this uncertainty," Katie murmured, kissing her mother, and following Walter, who called out:

"Hurry up, Katie! I want to be up there early, and get my place. We have managed to keep that spot all these days, and I've had splendid luck there."

"It is going to rain, I fear. See how cloudy it is; I had better stay home."

"No, no. Bring the umbrella. Don't you know how much better the fish bite such days, Katie?"

Again they arrived in time to secure the fine place for Walter's sport. And Katie began her watchful, wistful gaze. It was not long before the familiar form came in sight, nearer and nearer, until the poor girl could plainly see the same old look. And it really seemed to her he uttered an angry, impatient exclamation.

General Looms stopped not at his accustomed place, but came right up to where they sat. Planting his rod into the soil in the vicinity of Katie, he looked at her a few seconds, and then said, in a not very amiable tone:

"I did think you would have stayed home such an afternoon. It is a pity your mother has not something else for you to do. Can't *you* find anything more profitable to be about?"

Poor Katie, trembling with fright, stammered:

"No, sir."

Before she could control her emotion sufficiently to say anything more, the general exclaimed:

"Then I can. Do you write a fair hand? Can you count rapidly? But you can learn, if you do not already. Listen to me. Come to my room to-morrow morning, and I'll put you to work, and keep you so busy you will be glad to rest, and not come here every afternoon."

"Oh, sir, you are so kind, so very kind!" Katie, who had found her voice, exclaimed, growing rosy, and really quite pretty, with the joyous surprise. "How can I thank you?"

"By keeping off my fishing-ground. Don't you know, ever since you have been coming here, you've occupied my place? And being a young lady, I could not very well ask you to remove. And so I'll give you an office, to get rid of you," General Looms said, then laughing merrily, and looking as he "used to do," as Walter said.

Katie was so overjoyed and reassured by the pleasant

tone and manner of the general, that she told him all about the object of her coming; and the general exclaimed:

"And so you came a fishing for an office! But you used the worst kind of bait, my little girl."

"At any rate, you looked as if *you* would *bite* every time," Katie answered, her eyes dancing merrily.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the general. "I really have felt so. Well, I am truly glad to help the daughter of Mr. Ashley, and delighted to get her off my fishing-ground."

Mrs. Ashley was watching for her children's return. As soon as they came in sight, she noticed Katie's quick, light steps, and knew something pleasant had happened.

Katie's arms were soon about her while she told of the splendid luck she had met at last.

"Getting an office without asking for it, mamma. Only think of it!" Katie exclaimed.

"Ah, Katie, the true cause of your success was your extreme diffidence and timidity. You are such a modest, retiring little bird, none but those in the home nest know how lovely you really are," Mrs. Ashley said, with a fond look.

And Walter exclaimed, laughing:

"Please give me the credit of placing her in the true position to *command* success."

THE LANDLADY'S STORY.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"IT'S a hard life to lead. I'd never gone to it had poor Quail lived. Nobody but a woman that has kept boarders, and *women* boarders, too, can tell what a trial it is. No, I'd never have gone to it in the world hadn't Quail died and left me a poor, lone widow. Ah, isn't a widow—a poor widow—the loneliest body that ever was!

"To be sure, I had the children, and mother, and sister Ann; but they were not Quail. Some folks thought I could do better than keeping boarders. May be I might have tried. But where could I find another Quail? No woman has such luck twice. No, I always had my way; and if I took another, he might want to have his. So I gave up all thoughts of matrimony, and went to keeping boarders. Some folks was evil enough to say that it was to get a better chance; but you know if that was so I'd not have taken women, particularly widows, in. And now I'm going to tell you about the two I had. Nice women enough to me. I liked them both But, la! they didn't care a bit for each other, I guess. That is, folks in the house thought so. They were polite enough when they met at table; but each came to me with their complaints.

"I'll tell you how they looked before I tell you more.

Mrs. Julian was a pale, delicate little woman, with large, beautiful gray eyes, and wavy light-brown hair, with a quiet, almost sad way about her, as though she'd had a world of care and trouble. Nobody could think her beautiful then, but may be that she might have been in her better days. She never talked much, and when she did there was no foolishness in what she said. But, oh, deary me! that other one, Mrs. Darling—how her tongue could run! Clatter, clatter, and laughing nearly all the time.

"The merriest woman I ever saw, and handsome, too, with the brightest, blackest eyes, shining black hair—and all her own at that—although folks never believed it until she proved it to them.

"She was kind of daring, too, and would do things sometimes that some folks said was unladylike, and bold; and one time they said so, when she pulled out the comb and pins and let her beautiful hair down, shaking it out until it fell like a great black cloak about her. Some that couldn't do that were 'horrified!' 'jealous!' she said, flashing her eyes when she saw their sneering faces.

"She would say right out what she thought—and that was why I liked her. They both had children, two apiece. Folks said I kept an asylum for forlorn women and fatherless children. Well, my heart was weak, I couldn't say No to those like myself, to poor, lonely widows with young ones like my own, poor orphan children.

"Oh, but I had a time of it, trying to keep peace, to walk between those two, getting on the side of neither; not take up for one, nor be against the other. And then about the children! Each declared the other's were the worst that ever lived.

"'Do you think she ought to do so? Is she not very wrong?' asked one; and when she only just had gone from me the other came to say the same, and more.

"And then I'd speak of the faults of neither, only telling the goodness of both.

"'I don't like that Mrs. Darling, I cannot! She is so light and frivolous,' said Mrs. Julian.

"I don't like that woman, with her fine lady airs, she is so cold and proud!'

"And so the days went by, each seeming to dislike the other more and more.

"Perhaps about five months we had been together, when I had a new boarder come—a quiet, middle-aged man—who came well recommended. I had but two gentlemen before this one came—old Mr. Stearns, that no one minded. He was so deaf and almost blind; and his nephew, Billy Meeks, that wasn't smart a bit, a half-wit, some folks said. But that was nothing to me. They behaved themselves and paid me a good price, and always the day 'twas due.

"'I'm glad we are going to have a man in the house at last, and no longer only apologies for men; and I like his looks. I saw him as he went away. When is he coming? And do tell us his name?' said the merry widow.

"'To dinner to-morrow,' I answered. 'And Parkhurst is his name. Here is his card; he wrote it at the door.'

"'Let me see!' Mrs. Julian said quickly, holding out her hand to take it from the other one.

"'Wait a bit. I'm glad to see you can get up a little interest,' answered Mrs. Darling, passing the card, and saying:

"'Raymond! I like the name—I shall like him.'

"I never shall forget the look from those gray eyes. But oh! how pale the little woman had grown!

"'Are you ill?' I asked. 'Dear heart, sit down,' I said.

"But she pushed by me and went up to her room.

"'Temper, nothing more,' said Mrs. Darling. And I thought may be so myself.

"Near night I heard Mrs. Julian go out; and she sent a little note to me to tell me she was going out of town to her mother's, and would not be home until next night. I wasn't surprised; she had done this way before.

"Well, she came back next night, but the children were not with her.

"She sent for me to please come up in her room. Well, I went. She looked as if she had just got out of a spell of illness.

"'Mrs. Quail,' she said, 'I'm going to see if I can make some new arrangement with you. I don't want to leave you, but will have to unless you will send my meals to my room or let me have them by myself, before or after the others. I'd just as lief take mine with you and your children after all the others have gone, if you please, Mrs. Quail. I don't like strangers, and I will tell you more, if you will never mention it to any one. Promise.'

"I promised; and I never did until all was known by everybody.

"'Mrs. Quail, I am not a widow. I am a deserted wife,' she said, in a low, troubled voice.

"'Dear heart, do tell,' I cried. 'The villain! where is he?'

"'He is only like many other men, not much worse, perhaps. There may be fault on both sides. I cannot tell you more. This is why I care not to meet strange gentlemen. I must be careful, you know.'

"'Yes, dear. You are right. I understand. You can do as you choose,' I said.

"'Thank you. Then, I'll be with you and the children. I like that best. It will give less trouble,' she said.

"And I fixed it so.

"Mr. Parkhurst was a very quiet man indeed, and grave enough at times. But the merry widow never minded that. She would talk to him and make him smile at times.

"When they were gone away and the poor little woman came, I'd try to cheer her up. I'd tell of old Mr. Stearns, who had lately grown very attentive to Mrs. Darling, of Billy Meeks having sense enough to dislike the idea of a coming aunt; and of his saying:

"'She's laughing at ye, uncle. She's after the *money*. Don't let her get it!'

"And then I told how sorry we all felt for our new boarder. We knew he had some sorrow, that it was hard to bear; and how Mrs. Darling tried to cheer him up.

"'How does he act with her? Does he seem to like her?" Mrs. Julian quickly asked.

"'Middling well, I think,' I said.

"One day at dinner—I cannot be mistaken; I've often tried to think; may be I was—I thought I heard a footstep in the front room. I raised my eyes, and there, peeping through the window-curtains, I saw her. Her eyes looked as if they were starting out of her head, and they were fixed on Mr. Parkhurst and Mrs. Darling.

"I looked again, but she was gone.

"Often she would ask me: 'Does he like her?' And always I'd answer the same way: 'Middling well.'

"'*I hate her!*' she would answer, and go away to her room.

"She came home later one evening. By the lamplight we were sitting at the table. I thought Mr. Parkhurst was away, and so did she. So we didn't fasten the door, as most always before. We had finished eating and sat talking a while. She wanted to hear about all that was going

on, and I was telling how nearly all the evening Mrs. Darling sat on the sofa, in the front room, with the new boarder beside her.

"'Oh! that woman! that woman! I could almost wish her dead! I—'

"'Don't! don't!' I cried. 'Tis her way. She means no harm, and has never hurt you in any way—'

"'You don't—you don't know. Yes, I *hate* her!' she cried, the tears running from her eyes.

"Just then the door opened, and Mr. Parkhurst stood in it. In a second the light was out, and we were in darkness.

"It *might* have been the draft, but I thought it might be Mrs. Julian who blew it out.

"When I lighted it again she was gone.

"The next morning she did not come down. I was busy, and sent the girl up to see why.

"Soon she came flying back, and said that Mrs. Julian was very ill.

"Well, I might as well come to it at once. The next day the doctor told us what it was. Oh! I shall never forget the fright it gave me when the awful name came from his lips—small pox! Ugh!

"The boarders, every one but that 'heartless woman,' as she had called her, would have cleared out, but the doctor said it was no use, that they were in no more danger than everywhere else. He vaccinated all, and gave orders for only one person to attend her, and to remain up all the time. But where were we to find that one?

"'She is my neighbor. I am in the next room. We are away from the rest of the folks. Take care of my children, Mrs. Quail, and I will take care of her,' said this *heartless woman*.

"And so she did—risking her own life and her beautiful face for this one, who had no love for her.

"Our new boarder was graver than ever. Some declared he was frightened almost to death, and some that for Mrs. Darling he was anxious. I knew nothing about it, but how *very* little it took to keep him then.

"Well, it turned out to be a mild case, and by such careful nursing the woman was only a little marked. And when she came forth among us again she leaned on *our new boarder's arm*.

"'Have you never thought he was her husband?'

"No; how could you, if I didn't. La! how blind and dumb we are sometimes!

"Mrs. Darling—bless her kind heart!—told me all about it. When the sick woman knew what ailed her and who was with her, taking care of her, she cried out:

"'Why are you here? Go away! Go to *him!* You want to kill me!'

"'No. You don't know what you are saying. I won't mind. Listen: I am going to take such good care of you that you shall soon be well, and be no less pretty, either. I shall, with God's blessing, give you back to one who loves you dearly, whose heart is aching for you—your husband! —my friend! Yes, you'll know me better by-and-by, and be my friend then."

"This was what Mrs. Darling said; and after a while they grew to love each other dearly.

"You see, somehow, the merry-hearted widow found out all about Miss Julian (that was her maiden name), and she it was who brought our new boarder. Ah, she did a blessed deed! She made peace between those two, whom jealousy and quick temper had parted. They are the dearest friends now. Often the happy wife has said to me:

"'I love her—I love her as dearly as a sister. And I judged her so harshly!'

"Ah, we can't judge by what comes from the lips, what lingers in the heart. I know that well enough.

"'How was it you did this doubly-blessed deed?' asked I.

"'How?' A smile was on the merry widow's face as she answered: 'Why, because I could not help it.' And tears filled her bright eyes when she added: 'She was a sister woman.'

"There! I vow I believe that girl has let the turkey burn! Dear, dear! Keeping boarders is hard work. But, as poor dear Quail used to say about the railroad street cars, 'There's nothing like it for getting an insight of human nature.'"

THE RUSE.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"MILLIE! Millie! where are you? *Do* come down and help me. That's a darling. Watch the pies, and fry the doughnuts, do!" called a merry voice.

A moment after, a tall, graceful girl entered the kitchen. She would have been beautiful, but for her pale face and sad eyes.

"Oh, Millie, we have had just the *best* luck with everything. Not a pie scorched! Every cake done beautifully! The pudding, I know, will be the best in the country, for Rachel was never known to fail! And just look at the turkey! Isn't it a perfect beauty? Don't you remember what Doctor Grey said two Thanksgivings ago? That we had the best dinner and the prettiest girls in our house that could be found in the whole State, he was sure! We will have just as nice a *dinner* to-morrow. But for the girls we will let somebody else speak. I hope Archie will come. He half promised—"

A sigh from the sad girl reached the ear of her happy cousin, who quickly said:

"Oh, Millie, how thoughtless I am! I forgot—indeed I did—that you were not as light-hearted as—as when we were getting ready for Thanksgiving last year—no, two years ago. I can hardly think it has been so long."

"It has been very, very long to *me*, Katie," Millie

answered, wiping away the tears that had gathered, and, filling her eyes, stole down the pale cheeks.

"Millie, indeed I would not stand it. It is just hateful in uncle to act so. He was always the strangest man I ever saw. But while aunty lived, he was not just so dreadful. She could win him to something like civilization."

"Don't, don't, Katie. Remember you are talking of my father."

"Can't help it. He is my father's brother. And I don't care if he hears me say it. And if I were you, I would not run away. I am opposed to that; but I'd wait until I was twenty-one—that will be in six months—then I'd send for Frank, and have him ask once more for you. If uncle did not relent, I'd walk off with Frank right before his eyes, and be married. I would, just as sure as my name is Katie Gordon."

"No, no, Katie, I cannot do so. I am all that father has—the only one who loves him. I cannot leave him. He was good and kind until this trouble with Frank's father."

"Indeed, then stay miserable all the days of your life! And keep Frank so! Bless his dear heart! I just hope he won't stay miserable! There are lots of pretty girls who will jump at him. I would try and comfort him myself, only I love Archie a little better," the merry girl said, with a bright blush.

Then, with more apparent sympathy, she continued:

"Indeed, I am very, very sorry for you, Millie. But what is the good of being so sad? You can, if you choose, be happy. If you will not, and have made up your mind to do the dutiful at all cost, then resign yourself with good grace, and be content in the path you have chosen."

"Katie, I will tell you why just now I feel so very sad.

Frank is to be home to-morrow! His cousin told me. Oh, think of it! Only a half mile from each other, and yet so far apart!" Millie could not help sobbing then.

"And you will not see him?"

"Of course not; I dare not. Father forbade me. And it would only be going over the sad parting again; all the more sad because still more hopeless."

The entrance of Rachel, the cook, stopped the conversation.

Farmer Gordon and farmer Ralston were neighbors, and, at one time, good friends. Their farms adjoined. Once, a fine piece of meadow land separated them. Both wanted this land; both being willing to pay a very liberal price; neither was willing to resign his chance of purchasing, or to divide the possession.

So things remained for many months, indeed years, and then farmer Ralston came forward, and placed before his neighbor the deed for the land. It was obtained by some dishonorable means, farmer Gordon did not hesitate to declare. Since then, they had been bitter enemies. Well, folks in the neighborhood thought Ralston had done nothing wrong, and all espoused his cause. Farmer Gordon was generally unpopular, and it was a source of gratification to many that he had not been the successful purchaser.

The only son of one, and daughter of the other, had played together from infancy. After the quarrel between their fathers, they were ordered to keep to themselves. But this they couldn't do. In the first place, they loved each other too well. Then they met at church and singing-school. So it continued, until Frank was twenty-one and Millie seventeen. Thanksgiving evening, two years previous to my introducing Millie to my readers, Frank had sought farmer Gordon, told him how truly he loved his

daughter, and begged that he would give him permission to win her.

Even farmer Ralston, whose whole heart was centered in his only son, accompanied him, and joined his entreaties with Frank's, going so far as to offer the disputed land and his hand in friendship again. All of no use. The strange, hard man drove them forth. He told them he hated them both, and his girl should never bear their name.

There was a painful scene between Millie and her father. He said many dreadful things that wounded the sensitive, loving heart very sorely, and ending by telling her the only way she could gain his forgiveness for having allowed her affections to be won by one so hateful to him was to cast him from her mind and heart. So it was that Millie had never seen her lover since. She dared not even permit him to write to her. She had only sent him word that she could never love any one else. And so Frank, in return, sent word by his cousin that he would be as faithful, and they would trust to heaven for their future happiness.

Farmer Gordon had been harder and stranger since this affair than ever before. And poor little Millie would have been very miserable if merry Katie had not spent much of her time with her. She was an independent little piece, not a bit afraid of her "cross old uncle," as she called him. When she was with Millie, she would have merry young folks about her. Her uncle would take from her what he would from no one else. He really liked the straightforward, merry girl.

"Still sighing, Millie?" Katie said. "Now I just want to tell you plainly, you are being really wicked. How much you have to be thankful for! There are many girls more miserable than you. You just look as if we had a

funeral in the house. You better thank our Father for blessing you with health and strength, and sparing you, and all dear to you, to see another Thanksgiving! Just think—"

"Oh, Katie, how could I be more miserable? What could make me?"

Millie had hardly uttered these words when her father's own riding horse came dashing, riderless, up to the stile.

Millie was terrified. She knew that only an hour before her father had gone out on Victor, and she cried:

"Oh, Katie! where is father? Something terrible has happened! See! How terrified Victor looks?"

Her fears were soon realized. Slowly along the road came four of the hands bearing on a litter her father.

Although no favorite with his servants, for they all feared him, the men looked grave enough as they placed their burden in the hall. Millie threw herself down beside the cold, still form.

"Dead! dead!" she cried; and in an agony of grief clasped her arms about him.

One of the men, nodding his head, said:

"'Tain't no use to go on so, miss," and removed her from her father's form.

Lifting gently, they bore him in, and placing him on his bed, stood around waiting further orders from Katie.

"Are you *sure* there is no life? James, go quickly and bring Doctor Grey."

"'Tain't no use, Miss Katie; *deed* it 'tain't," the man said.

"Oh, father! father! Why, why are you taken from me? Oh, maybe he is not dead. Run, James; oh, please, tell Doctor Grey to come! Oh! if God will give him back to me, I never, never will be thankful enough."

Rachel, the cook, who had been in the family for years, came forward, saying:

"'Tain't no use to go on so, child. If he is dead, it's God's will. I only wish he had been better prepared to go. And as for you, child, I think you'll be all the happier after a bit—"

"No, no, no! I loved him, indeed I did. I never would have left him. And, oh, he used to love me once, so very much. Don't you remember how he used to love me, Rachel? And I remember when I always used to go to sleep in his arms. Dear, dear father!" Millie sobbed.

"You had better go for Doctor Grey, anyhow, James. We want a friend at this time," Rachel said.

"Oh, oh, oh!" sobbed Millie, bursting forth anew with her grief.

"You will make yourself ill, child," Rachel said.

"Oh, I don't care! I wish I could go to heaven!" Millie cried.

"Miss Millie, Master Frank is home," whispered one of the men.

"Don't, don't, Bill! I can't think of anybody but my dear, dear father. Oh, if he would only open his eyes and speak to me! Just say, 'Millie,' and kiss me once more! Oh, please, dear Lord, give me back my father! Indeed, I cannot believe he is dead! Only fainted! Oh, if father is given back to me, I *never* will grieve any more about anybody! Katie, come here, quickly! Can't you feel a *little* warmth coming?"

"Millie!" Farmer Gordon's eyes opened, and he said: "Millie, I'm not dead. Kiss me, child!"

With a wild cry of joy Millie clasped her arms about him, and fainted on his bosom.

"I did not think the child loved me so!" Farmer Gordon said, looking not a bit like a dead or dying man.

"You scarcely deserve it, uncle, from her," Katie said, sharply. She began to see that it had all been one of her uncle's queer whims.

"There, Rachel! you know what to do for her. She is just like her mother. She would faint, alike for joy or grief. I know now how well you love me, Rachel, too."

"As well as you will let me. Be more like the Lord likes you to be, and you'll find more love," Rachel said, as she, with James' assistance, carried Millie to her own room.

"Uncle, you did this on purpose. I know it. Are you hurt at all?" Katie said, looking very reproachfully at him.

"Well, Miss Pert, I can do without a doctor," he answered.

And Katie went off to help take care of Millie. From James she worried out the truth, who said:

"For heaven's sake, don't let old master know I told! But he got off Victor. Give him a sharp cut, and sent him flying. Then made us fix a litter and bring him home. It was lying still in the cold that made him look and feel dead. He said he wanted to see if anybody cared if he was dead."

Thanksgiving, Millie was quite herself again. All the day her father had been more as he used to be years before.

"More like a Christian," Rachel said.

"Less like a heathen," Katie declared.

He had patted Millie's head several times, and kissed her, saying he wanted to see the roses come back to her cheeks again.

Katie was as gay as a lark. Her Archie came from town, and she presided over *her dinner*, she claimed, surrounded by a merry host of young friends and Doctor Grey, the family physician. He had always been Farmer Gordon's friend, asserting he knew there was good enough in Gordon's heart if one knew how to find it.

The young folks were gathered in the parlor. Katie was going to have a dance. Millie's face, although not as sad as usual, looked not as Katie wished to see it. She had been trying to make up her mind to plead with her uncle for Millie.

"I'm not afraid to do it; only I don't want to put him in a rage when he is acting something like a human—I—yes, I'll risk it.

"Uncle, come here," she said, drawing him off to herself. "Uncle, if you had been dead yesterday, do you not think Frank Ralston would have found his way over here to—"

"Give thanksgiving to God for delivering the neighborhood in general, and himself particularly, from such a pest, I suppose," said her uncle, with a half serious, half comic expression.

"Nothing of the kind. Only to try and comfort Millie."

"She would not have let him—not so soon."

"No, dear girl, she is so dutiful that she would not, I fear. Uncle, why won't you be worthy of that girl's love?"

"Be off with you, you saucy piece!"

"No, not until I say my say, uncle; send for Frank—send now."

"I will not; neither now, to-morrow, nor ever! Go along! Mind your own affairs, and let Millie's alone!" farmer Gordon answered, yet not so wrathfully as she thought he might.

All were dancing but Millie. She sat with thoughts far away. Her father came up to her, and asked:

"Will you not dance, my darling?"

He had not called her so for years. She looked up with much surprise, and answered:

"I care not to dance, father."

"Come, I will find you a partner."

He took her hand and led her out into the hall. With a cry of joy she sprang forward.

"There is a partner for life, little girl! Take her, Frank, and send to heaven with her a prayer of thanksgiving for bringing an old man to his better nature! God bless you and make you *both* as happy as *she* deserves to be!"

"Oh! uncle, I thought you said you never would," Katie exclaimed, almost choking her uncle with kisses.

"Because I had *already* done it, and knew I would not have to send for him twice," farmer Gordon said, with a merry chuckle.

"We will build a home for Millie right in the middle of the meadowland. And it shall be hers—a peace gift from two old men who, praise be to God, are trying to get a little nearer heaven!" said farmer Ralston.

It was the happiest Thanksgiving ever known to both families. All joined in a grateful prayer to Him who doeth all things well.

THE MASTER'S HEAD.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"IS Mrs. Hammond in?" I asked, of the pleasant-looking girl who, in answer to my ring, opened the hall door.

"Yes, marm. But—" The girl hesitated. "Come in, marm," she continued.

I hesitated, then, feeling there was something which would prevent my visit being very agreeable, perhaps.

"Come in, marm; and plase excuse me if I take you into the sitting-room. And all littered it is, sure. But the marster is up in the parlor with his head, sure."

Of course I was pleased to be assured that my friend's husband still held possession of that very important article, although, to be sure, I had not been *very anxious* on the subject, as just now, in our own blessed land, the dread seems to be of having a head *put on*, instead of taken off. I smiled, following Norah in, saying:

"I shall not be frightened by the looks of your sitting room, Norah. Our little ones seem decidedly opposed to a tidy-looking room; so I shall feel quite at home."

"Yes, marm. Thank you. It's the childers that have done it, sure. And no help for it, neither; for their mother told me to let thim be doing of anything but making of a noise."

I pretty well understood what the trouble was before

my friend came down. After greeting me in her usual gentle, sweet manner, she said:

"You have come to give me the long-promised pleasure—to spend the day. Take off your hat and wrappings;" approaching and beginning to remove my furs.

"Evelyn, stop! You know that it will not be at all agreeable to have me remain; but you are too polite and hospitable to say so," I said.

"Not very agreeable to *you*, most likely; and my pleasure will be very much marred. Norah has told you how much Herbert is suffering with his head? I have to be with him constantly during these spells. His only relief is afforded by my rubbing. But at times the pain almost ceases, and I can run down to look after the children. Now, if you stay, I shall be glad; and if you can manage to amuse yourself in any way until the evening, or about sunset, then I can be with you. Herbert's pain is generally quite gone by that time," Evelyn said.

Thinking I could probably be of service, I agreed to remain.

"Now I must go back," she said; adding, "Babies, try not to be very noisy."

She hastened up-stairs. Throwing off my wrappings, I soon busied myself with the children—telling them stories, and cutting out of paper, to order, men, women and numberless animals. To distinguish the dogs from horses or cats myself, I had to write the name on each. But the little ones were remarkably bright and very imaginative, and saw the wonderful likeness of each to some animal they knew of the kind.

A little while, and Norah came in, saying:

"Now, I'll be after making this room a little dacent, sure. And in the kitchen the breakfast dishes all stared at me with their dirty faces a shaming me all the time,

But it's all in their places, and clane, I've put them now."

Telling the good-natured girl, no matter about doing up the room, I should attend to it myself after getting through with my work of creating a deal of litter, as well as men and beasts, I dismissed her to more necessary work. Very soon after came the boys from school. Two merry, noisy fellows they were; and were just dashing up the steps to find "mamma," when Norah, rushing after, caught them both in one embrace, and landed them before me, saying:

"Pray kape them here. When their father is home with his head, no one but the mistress dare go in the room. I'll give them a bite; and you, too, if ye plase, marm."

Understanding what Norah meant, and thinking, by accepting her offer, I should somewhat relieve Evelyn of any anxiety as to my comfort, I thanked her, and turned to greet the boys.

As if to explain the state of affairs, and likewise offer some excuse for their submitting to what they seemed to fear might appear to me an indignity, Fred, the elder, after whispering to Charley, "I'll tell her," said:

"Papa is awful nervous when he has the headache, and mamma tells us we must be very quiet, or," shaking his curly head, "I'd gone for Norah when she caught us so."

"'Deed we would," chimed in Charley.

Norah gave us a really nice lunch, apologizing for everything being cold, except a very excellent cup of tea. Light biscuit, chipped beef, cake and preserves were before us, when again Evelyn slipped in, kissed her boys, giving them loving words of commendation for being so good, and Norah for being so attentive and thoughtful. She could not be induced by the daughter of Erin to "take a bite" herself. But accepting the cup of tea offered, she said:

"I'll take it up with me. Do try and make a lunch,

dear. Norah finds it impossible to do much cooking when she has the children to mind. In truth, when Herbert comes home with the headache, everything is stopped to keep the house quiet. I never feel like eating when he is suffering so, and the children are satisfied with what Norah can find for them."

Again she flitted away, and Norah muttered:

"A starving of herself, and to-morrow it will be sick enough she is; and thin what?"

"She will be as well cared for as *she* cares for Mr. Hammond, I trust," I replied.

With a very significant elevation of the naturally turned-up nose, and a toss of the amber-hued head, Norah went out. Returning in a few moments after with water and a towel, she washed the boys' faces and hands. Then giving an apple to each, she bade them "be off."

Late in the afternoon Evelyn came down, a relieved expression on her face as she said:

"I'm so glad! he is better, and will be quite well after we give him something to eat."

Norah was despatched on an errand.

In an almost incredibly short time we were sitting with Mr. Hammond to a nice supper. Beefsteak, broiled just as it should be, for the convalescent; fried oysters for the others. I noticed that Evelyn eat but little, and feared, as Norah said, she would be sick herself. Mr. Hammond bore unmistakable signs of the suffering through which he had passed. He told me those spells were quite frequent. The evening was spent very pleasantly, and ended by Norah's escorting me to my home, which was not very distant.

The next day, being a little anxious about my friend, and having business in the neighborhood, I decided to call for a few moments to inquire if she was well.

found her lying on a lounge in the sitting-room, suffering terribly with her head. Through the opened door I smelt the dinner, and heard Norah hurrying around. The little ones were trying to be quiet, but every now and then a box of tin toys came tumbling down, or a little chair was overturned, making noise sufficient to startle a well person with ordinarily strong nerves. She tried to rise to welcome me. I saw how much the effort cost her, and begging her to remain quiet, I asked:

"Why do you stay down here? Do let me help you up to bed."

"I must, until the boys get home to take care of the little ones. Norah has dinner to get. Herbert never likes to wait for it," she panted.

Norah came in, removed the cloth from the burning brow, and wetting it in the ice-water near, placed it gently back, at the same time receiving some instructions relative to the dinner.

Very soon Mr. Hammond came in. After greeting me, he asked:

"No better yet, Evie?"

She shook her head, and he continued, turning to me:

"You see we both have very troublesome heads."

As Norah was dishing her dinner he began talking about the most interesting topics of the day. Drawing from his pocket a paper, he read an extract or two.

Seeing this added to poor Evie's suffering, I proposed again she should go up-stairs.

"Certainly; you are right. I could not stand these children's noise. Let me take you up," Herbert said, for a moment recalled to the fact of his wife's suffering.

She arose to go, saying she could get along very well. He must eat his dinner, which was ready then. I accom-

panied her, and making her as comfortable as possible, was about taking my leave, when in came little Evie, crying, Carrie after her, lisping:

"Papa make us tum up. Papa says he tan't weed when we bodder him so."

"Oh, you should try and not bother papa so much, darling," Evelyn said, in a voice that told how much she was suffering.

I managed to draw them from her to a distant part of the room, giving them some pictures she bade me get. Again quiet was partially obtained.

Fifteen minutes might have passed thus, when Mr. Hammond came in, bringing with him the perfume of a fine Havana.

"Oh, Herbert, dear, please don't smoke," Evelyn moaned.

"Sure enough. I forgot about your head. There, it is out. I just ran up to tell you I'm going out for a walk—over to look at the tunnel. Do the children annoy you? Norah might keep them down-stairs now. I will be back in about an hour."

Bowing to me and smiling, he went out. I could not stay another moment, my engagement for the evening forbidding. Taking with me the babies, I promised to give them in charge of Norah. I found the girl busy clearing up the dinner-table.

"Can you keep these little ones down here, Norah?" I asked.

"Sure, and I can," answered Norah. "But it's *himself* that *might* have stayed at home, and not been after going away at all."

"Gentlemen do not think about such things, Norah. You know they can't be expected to," I said.

"Sure, and it's myself that knows the difference it

makes when it's *his* head. And it's not so long a time, at all, that *he* should be forgetting of it, sure! But what can ye expect of a man? It's Norah O'Brien that's had the trial of one, sure! and they're *all alike*. They be after knowing what aches and pains are when they're having thim themselves, sure. And they don't *think* any other time. It's not their nature at all," Norah said.

And I bade her good-by, going my way and pondering over Norah's words, "*All* men are alike;" believing, myself, to the contrary. *Some* are thoughtful; a *few* as gentle and kind as women, I know.

THAT HARD MAN.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"MOTHER, Mr. Stearns says you can't have anything more, until you've paid what you owe now —four dollars and ninety-four cents. See, he put it down for me to show you," said a bright-looking lad of about nine years, as he entered his mother's room; and dropping the empty basket, sank on a stool, looking with a disappointed face up into hers.

"I did not think it was so much. I would not have sent to ask for further credit if I had. I know he never likes the amount to go over five dollars. Saturday night, when I am paid, I always pay Mr. Stearns. I suppose he is worried because I was not up to time. But you know how sick I was," answered the boy's mother, turning to a woman who sat beside her, busily engaged sewing buttons on a shirt.

"Well, I'd just write him a line, and tell how it was, if I was you," said her companion.

"Yes, yes, you are right. I will. But I will not ask him for credit again until I pay him. I'd be sorry to have him think I was not as good as my word. And I'm sorry I can't give you a nice cup of tea and some toast, as I intended to. But—"

She was interrupted by her friend, saying:

"It is all for the best, may be. Oh, of course it is. No

doubt about it. 'Everything happens for the best,' was one of the first things my poor mother used to try and impress on her children. Now don't think any more about it on my account. I had a right good breakfast before I left home. Now send Willie off with the line to Mr. Stearns, and then we will finish these shirts in a little time."

Mrs. Grey found it quite difficult to get together the necessary articles for writing the explanatory note. At length, with a sheet cut from Willie's copy-book, and the ink borrowed from her next door neighbor, she pushed off from the table the pile of shirts, and sat down. It took her a long time first to frame in her mind the words she thought the best, and quite as long to write them down. During that time Willie's mind was very much exercised. Too well he knew no one had breakfasted in his home that morning. Not for himself he cared; but for mother and sister Nellie his heart was troubled.

"Oh! why can't I think of some way to make enough money to buy some tea and toast?" he kept saying to himself. And then he went to counting the cost. "Six cents will get a drawing of tea, I know. Then the sugar; four cents for that. Nobody will sell me quarter of a pound for less. Oh, if I only could buy it by the large—a whole pound—I'd get it for thirteen cents. Well, I can't help it; must buy as I can pay. What next? Bread, six cents; and butter, quarter of a pound again. Oh, dear, ten cents more! Oh, when I'm rich I will always buy on the large —a whole pound every time. Now, how much does all come to? Six and four, that's ten; and six, sixteen; and ten again, twenty-six cents. Yes, that's what the tea and toast will cost. But where can I raise so much money? I must; indeed, I must, somehow."

The boy's face told plainly how his young brain was working over the great difficulty, and trying to overcome it. Suddenly his brow cleared, the closed lips parted with a hopeful smile, and he jumped up, exclaiming:

"Hurry, mamma, dear. I have only three quarters of an hour to attend to business before school time."

"Yes, I've finished now. It is so long since I have written a note, it is more difficult than it used to be. But, darling, you can't go without some breakfast," Mary Grey answered, handing the note to her boy.

Willie caught it from her, and sang out, in a cheery voice:

"No matter about breakfast for me. I'm all right. I'll be hungry in time for our dinner. A kiss is enough just now. Good-by."

He caught his hat, snatched a hasty kiss, and was out of the door a moment after.

"What a blessed boy! Many would have gone off with a different face," said Mrs. Grey's friend.

"He is a great comfort. Oh, I've two cents. I must call him; he will be hungry, I know. I will tell him to buy two rolls as he passes the baker's."

Mrs. Grey, in her haste to call Willie back, swept from the little table the cover and everything on it. She was out on the doorstep, and heard not the exclamation of alarm from the little woman, who snatched up the inkstand. When Mrs. Grey came in, a few minutes after, and caught sight of her friend's face, she cried out:

"What has happened? What ails you, Jane?"

Her companion held up two shirts, across the bosoms and sleeves of which most of the ink had fallen.

"Heaven help me!" cried Mary Grey. "Troubles never come singly. What shall I do now?"

Jane Andrews' lips parted. She looked toward her friend, who cried out:

"Don't, for pity's sake. I know what you want to say, Jane—what you always say, no matter what happens."

While the women stood bewailing the dreadful accident, little Nellie had caught the shirts from Mrs. Andrews and plunged them into a pail of water.

"Well, it *is* awful hard to see it sometimes; but still I believe it is all for the best," said Jane, in a determined voice.

One would scarcely believe it possible for the mild, gentle eyes of Mary Grey to flash forth such a look of indignation. After which they filled with tears, as she cried:

"Best!—best that my children should go hungry—best that I shall be deprived of the means to keep them from starving! *You* know Mr. Dyson. Every one knows he is a hard man to work for. I know he will make me pay for these shirts, or discharge me; perhaps both."

Both women rubbed away diligently, and the dreadful spots faded slightly; but it was useless to hope to get them out that day. It would certainly require many hours of hot sun to entirely obliterate them.

"What shall I do? I was to have returned them Saturday. They are to be delivered at noon to-day—a special order," groaned Mary.

"Put your trust in the Lord, and go carry home the four. That's all you can do now," Jane Andrews said, and longed to conclude with her favorite maxim. But, remembering Mary's look, she refrained.

Willie after receiving the two cents, hurried along, neither stopping at the bakery nor Mr. Stearns'. On he went, many streets further, until he came to a pretty, neat look-

ing cottage. Opening the gate, he rang the bell. It was soon answered by a pleasant, motherly-looking woman, who asked:

"What is it, my little man?"

"Please ma'am, I heard you offer Jim Barnes thirty-five cents to clear up your yard Saturday afternoon. I will do it for twenty-six, if—if—"

"Well, if what? Speak out. You are Willie Grey, aren't you?" asked the smiling woman.

"If you pay me now, and let me do it after school, I will be here ten minutes after school closes."

He looked with such an appealing expression up into her eyes, that although she said:

"Why, child, that would be a little risky, wouldn't it?" she looked kindly on him, and Willie felt he had much to hope for.

"No, ma'am. It is a safe bargain. I'll do it, if I live till this afternoon. If you will only give me twenty-six cents, I will be so thankful," he said, the appealing look deepening in his eyes.

"I will do it," the good woman said, and stopped Willie's thanks by asking, "How is it, when Jim wanted fifty cents, you are willing to take about half as much?"

"More than half, a little. Oh, Jim don't know the worth of money. He don't know how much twenty-six cents will buy. He don't know how to spend it right," Willie said, with a manly look. Clasping in his hand tightly his prize, he was about running off, when his friend called him back to say:

"Willie, I hope you will spend it rightly."

He turned. The eyes that were dancing, the face beaming, grew earnest, and so full of love, as he said, softly,

"For mother, ma'am," and hastened away.

"God bless him!" she said, and was still standing on

the door-step when a buggy stopped before it, and a gentleman jumped out. Coming up, he said:

"Mrs. Lovering, I feel rather uneasy about the children. The woman I have to take care of them has not much experience. Will you come with me and see what ails them, and if they need a physician?"

"They need a mother's care, poor little dears! Certainly I will go, and be ready in two minutes," answered Mrs. Lovering, hurrying in.

Mr. Dyson waited outside, and pondered on Mrs. Lovering's words. He had been thinking just so himself several times lately, when he could spare the time from business to think of anything else.

True to her word, Mrs. Lovering was ready in the mentioned time.

Willie Grey was just coming out of Mr. Stearns' with his little bundles as they passed. He looked up, smiled and raised his hat.

"That's the best boy I know," Mrs. Lovering said; and when Mr. Dyson asked:

"Who is he?" she answered:

"Why, the widow Grey's son. She works for you."

Strange, yet so it was, that to both Mr. Dyson and Mrs. Lovering came the thought that the widow Grey would be a good mother for the motherless children.

Mrs. Lovering related the incident which occurred just before Mr. Dyson's arrival, and by that time they were before his door.

The little children Mrs. Lovering found really ill. The physician was summoned, and pronounced the malady, what the good woman feared—scarlet fever.

Ten minutes of nine, Willie stood smiling before his mother. Seeing her troubled face, thrusting his parcels into her hands, he said. in a glad voice:

"It's all right. You will be stronger when you get a good cup of tea. It's my treat. All paid for. I must run, the bell is ringing. I will be late home; got to do some work for Mrs. Lovering. Good-by."

Again he was off, with blessings following him.

Nellie prepared the tea and toast by the time her mother and Mrs. Andrews had finished the shirts.

Willie would have been sadly disappointed, could he have seen the grave faces that gathered round his treat. However, when she arose from the table, Mrs. Grey said:

"Willie was right, dear boy! I do feel stronger in mind, as well as body. Now I must get ready. Oh, mercy! I would sooner face a cannon's mouth than Mr. Dyson. I know he will be in an ill-humor before I get there; and when I do—"

The pale face grew paler with thoughts of the dreaded interview.

Just then they heard a vehicle of some kind stop in front of the house. Mrs. Grey, looking out of the window, exclaimed:

"Lord help me! It is Mr. Dyson.

An instant after a knock was heard on the door. Mary Grey, pale and trembling, opened it. As she raised her eyes appealingly to his, Mr. Dyson wondered he had never noticed how very pretty the little woman was before. He said:

"Mrs. Grey, I called to see about those shirts. I thought something must have happened to—" He stopped, noticing her agitation, and exclaimed:

"You are ill! Go in, madam. Don't be standing here," and taking her gently by the arm, he led her to the lounge, when she burst into tears, saying:

"Have pity! Oh, Mr. Dyson, I've spoiled two of the shirts!" Not daring to glance at him, she went on: "I

know you will discharge me, of course, and make me pay for the shirts, too. But, please don't take it all at once! Pay me some, and let me work just till I pay for the others."

Finding he did not speak some dreadful harsh words, Mary raised her eyes timidly to his.

He was looking at her, not a shade of anger on his brow.

"Am I such a terrible man that I frighten poor women almost out of their senses?" he asked, a really pleasant smile on his face.

"Folks say you are dreadful hard," Mary answered, in a low voice.

"Humph! Well, perhaps I have been; but business is business, and I have little time for anything else. I'm not sorry you spoiled those shirts, for it has shown me what a timid, gentle little woman you are. You would not be unkind or hard on another woman's children. Now I have not the least idea of discharging you. On the contrary, I want to engage you permanently. Will you come and take care of my little children? They are sick, and need a kind, loving hand to tend them."

"Come! Certainly I will. Oh, thank you! How kind you are! I will get ready now," exclaimed Mary, starting up to go into the other room, when Mr. Dyson called:

"Stop a moment. There are some little arrangements to make, I guess. You'll have to close up here, and—and— Well, who do you prefer to do the business?"

Mary Grey turned and looked inquiringly into the smiling face. Mr. Dyson continued:

"What parson, I mean, to marry us?"

"Marry!" exclaimed Mary, sinking again on the lounge, her face crimsoning then.

"Yes, marry. Didn't I tell you a permanent engagement? How else can you be a mother to my little ones?"

Come, speak out! I'd no idea it would take so long. I don't want the time lost. You have known me six months. Do you like me any better, or not as well, on acquaintance?" asked Mr. Dyson.

"Better. Oh, yes. But—"

Mr. Dyson interrupted her:

"Never mind. Will you have me? We will settle everything as you wish afterward."

"But the children—mine? What about them?"

"I will be a father to yours, when you are mother to mine. And— Well, I will do the courting at odd times, when business is dull, and I have plenty of time. I know women like to be courted; so it will do as well after marriage, won't it? And then I'll not have given you the chance to throw at me, what so many men have to hear: 'All before marriage, and none after.' Now, say quick: Will you have me?"

Mary Grey looked into his eyes earnestly a moment, and then answered:

"Yes."

Mr. Dyson clasped her hand, and with an earnest

"God bless you! May He deal with me as I do with you and yours. Now about the arrangements?" he asked.

"Suit yourself," Mary answered.

"Thank you. Then I will come to take you to your new home this afternoon, at six o'clock."

Mary opened her lips to utter a cry of remonstrance, but he shook his head and hurried out.

As the door closed after him Mary stepped back into the other room and stood before her friend. Jane had heard most of the conversation, and when Mary asked:

"What *do* you think of me?"

"I think in future you will let me say 'Everything

*n*appens for the best,' because mother always said so; and now I know it for myself."

Willie finished his work for Mrs. Lovering, after which that kind woman went with him to his new home, where his noble qualities were fully appreciated. And he had never after any reason to doubt the truth of Jane Andrews' favorite maxim. And she, good woman, became firmer than ever in her faith, when a year after she married the foreman of Mr. Dyson's establishment. Constantly she proves her gratitude to the kind Father, who brightened her own dreariness by throwing little rays of sunshine across the darkened paths of those within her reach.

UNDER THE TRAIN.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"IT is no use, mother, not a bit of use to try. You might as well attempt to catch and chain the wind in its wildest course, as to stay Abner Markley in his. Better let him alone."

"Don't talk so, husband. I must, indeed I must. His mother would have tried to save my boy, in the same situation, I know. It may be as you say, but I'll try all the same; and if I fail—no, no, I must not fail; I can't bear to use that word. Well, I'll do my duty, and trust to God for the result," answered Ruth Mild, as she wiped away the tears that stole gently down her sweet motherly face.

"You don't think of the danger to our own boy. If you bring him here, Ruth, God only knows where it might end. You forget." And Abel Mild glanced with an anxious eye through the open door into the next room, where sat a little maiden, the miniature picture of her mother—fairer and fresher in coloring though.

"Oh, Abel! that child, little more than a baby!"

"In her sixteenth year, and he handsome enough to make a girl forget mother, father, and the whole world, for him. Don't do it, mother. It is a hereditary sin, from father to son. Would you see your child the wife of a drunkard?"

A shiver, a little cry of terror, and for a moment the sweet face paled. She hesitated, and Abel Mild thought he had triumphed.

"No. God will spare me that, I trust—I *know*. And so I will trust Him—aye, 'even though He slay me.'"

"And offer your own lamb to the sacrifice!" Abel said, in a tone that told the dark forebodings that possessed his spirit.

Again she faltered, and leant, with her head buried in her hands, as if praying. Again her eyes were looking into Abel's, clear, and showing no doubts in her heart.

"He knoweth my heart—its weakness and its strength. He will not try me beyond my power to bear. If you love me, Abel, say no more. Never before, in the twenty years of our married life, have I murmured against your will. Now I feel that I am doing His," she said, raising her eyes upward.

There was an expression on her face more beautiful than Abel had ever seen, even in those days when he thought there was not as lovely a face in the world—an expression so holy, so trusting, that Abel went up to her, drew her head on his bosom, and kissing her, said:

"May He you trust bless and reward you, Ruth, my dear, good little wife. Forget what I've said, and go your way, which has ever been the right one."

"Thank you, Abel. You have made me happier. And now I will go. He leaves his office at three o'clock, dines at four; if I start now, I will be there just the right time. He will have finished, and be in his room."

Abner Markley, as Abel Mild had said, was handsome enough to win the heart of any woman. He was sitting in his room, as Ruth hoped to find him. And when he jumped up to welcome her, she thought of her husband's words.

"What an unexpected pleasure, Mrs. Mild!" he said, placing her in the comfortable chair from which he had just arisen.

"Yes? I'm glad to find you disengaged. I have another pleasure awaiting you. See! Looking over my treasures I found this, and have brought it for you—to give you, if you wish."

She held toward him a little velvet case, which he hastened to take and open.

Ruth Mild anxiously watched his face while he gazed on the miniature he held.

"My mother! Is it? Yes, I know it! Oh, thank you, my dear Mrs. Mild. How very, very beautiful! But I cannot remember her thus. Here her eyes are so laughing, her lips ready to break into smiles. I'm glad to have this to look at; for always, when thinking of her, I can only call up a face, beautiful enough, but oh! sad, so very sad! her eyes looking as though they had shed oceans of tears. And she once looked like this?"

"Yes, my boy. She sat for that in her wedding dress, a week before she became your father's wife. I was her bride's maid. She was the merriest girl in the village when your father won her from us, and carried her off to the city to live."

"Mrs. Mild"—he turned his eyes from the beautiful picture to hers, and asked—"what changed my mother so terribly? Was my father not kind?"

She hesitated.

"Tell me—all. I remember nothing of father. I have been told I was only five years old when he died. Was it his death—"

"No, no; but—"

"Speak freely, Mrs. Mild."

"May I? Well, it was the manner of your father's

death which broke her heart; but it had been terribly wounded before, Abner. She was a drunkard's wife."

The good woman's voice had sunk so low he had to lean forward to catch the words, and then started back with a wounded cry, which caused her to say:

"I've hurt you. Forgive me."

"Yes, yes. But go on. Tell me all. Say it as you choose," he said, sinking back into his chair, and covering his face with one hand, the other still holding his mother's picture.

She talked on, picturing to him in graphic colors the young bride leaving them, so happy, so trusting; of the first surprise and mortification; the dreadful fears when she was no longer surprised; then the suffering all alone—she could confide that sorrow to none; of hope entering her heart again when she watched for the "little one's coming."

The reformation which brought for a brief time such holy happiness, as over the little one's—the baby boy's—cradle she stood with him she trusted in again—again to be disappointed. On and on to the violent death she told him, and then Ruth Mild pleaded as only a mother can plead. And when she finished by saying:

"Yes, my boy, the last time we met, she held you in her arms, and pressing her pale lips to yours, she said:

"'Oh, Ruth, if I could take my darling with me, I would gladly, gladly close my eyes to earth! But if I leave him, shall I ever find him again? Will he come?—Oh God, will my boy come to me up there?"

Ruth Mild's voice was trembling, scarcely audible, as she repeated the dying mother's words.

Abner's bosom was convulsed with emotion. He did not try to conceal it as he sobbed forth:

"Yes, yes, mother, with God's help I will come to you."

Ruth Mild had conquered. Abner Markley became one of her household. In every way she endeavored to hold him firm. Little Alice, with her dove-like eyes, was a source of deep and pure pleasure to the young man. She was so different from every other girl he knew—so gentle, so artless and childlike. Hours that used to be spent in drinking and club-rooms were passed reading to her, telling of the wonders of the old world, over which he had travelled, or in singing with her.

Those were happy evenings to all. Father Mild forgot his fears, as he watched the young folks and listened to the beautiful music they made—Alice at the piano, Abner with his flute, and the old man's second self, young Abel, with his violin. A year passed thus, bringing Abner, as he felt, nearer to mother. The tongues of many with their dark predictions had ceased, and those who had trusted pronounced Abner Markley saved.

"I wish I could excuse myself from this party to-night," Abner said. And little Allie asked:

"Must you go?"

"I think so. I did not intend to. I'd made up my mind to send an excuse, but the Judge came into my room this afternoon and insisted. You know he is our chief, and it is a respect due him to accept his invitation; but I will not stay long. There are some pretty wild fellows going—determined to have a 'time,' as they say; but I'll slip from them, and hasten back home to you, my little dove-eyed darling Allie here. Sit up for me; I have something to tell you, and something to beg for," he whispered. And then, as she stood in the door, he said:

"There, run in out of the cold. I must be more careful of you. Stop a moment. Kiss me, Allie?"

She drew back. He knew that her cheeks were crimsoned, although it was too dark to see.

"Mother will not care; kiss me, darling. I will tell her all to-morrow. Thank you. Now run in," he said.

And she darted off to shed a few happy tears, and watch and wait for his coming.

"God bless her! I wonder if mother is watching over us to-night? I wish she were alive, to know my darling," Abner said, as the door closed on Allie's retreating form.

It was a brilliant throng that gathered in the saloon of Judge Armstead. Abner Markley was a universal favorite, and all welcomed him warmly.

That party was decidedly the party of the season. The music grand, the supper a perfect success. How the wine sparkled! And some of the women's eyes brightened, I'm sorry to tell, as they sipped the tempting glass.

Abner Markley forgot for the time the dove-like eyes of Allie, as he looked into the bright, flashing black ones of a girl whose influence he had known before. And when she held to him a glass of champagne, saying:

"How can you resist? take it," he replied.

"I could resist the wine, but not *you*." And taking it from her, drained the glass—another and another.

The hours passed on. Allie watched and waited.

Not until he had placed his tempter in her carriage did Abner start for home, and then he had his senses sufficient to know he could not return to Allie as he was.

In the gray light of morning, when little Allie, weary with watching, had fallen asleep with her pale face against the window, there came a slow, heavy tread along the pavement. The door bell aroused her from a frightful dream. She started, confused and terrified, to listen.

Strange voices reached her ear, talking in awed tones. She sped on to the passage to catch the words,

"Found dead on the track."

Down the steps, with a wild cry, and beside the bier she fell; her arms clasped about the dead—her dead—she cried:

"No, no, not dead! Abner, speak to Allie, your Allie. See; I've waited for you as you bade me. Abner! Abner! —Father, has he fainted?" turning her face, with an appealing look, toward her father, who, shaking his head sorrowfully, tried to take her away.

"Dead!" she cried, in a tone that brought the tears to the rough men's eyes, and they turned off as Abel Mild lifted his child away and placed her in her mother's arms.

"I *do* wish we had not had wines last night," said Mrs. Armstead the next morning, while sipping her coffee.

"Why not?" asked her husband.

"Why, did you not notice young Markley used considerable, and felt the effects too? You know he had given it up for a year. You remember I suggested we should dispense with it."

"Nonsense! Give up a social custom for the sake of *one* fellow who is too weak to resist! I shall never do it."

"Mother!" exclaimed Fred Armstead, rushing in—"Mother, Abner Markley is dead!—found dead across the railroad track. Concussion of the brain, they say."

Concussion of the brain, they say! Can that decision of the physicians bring relief to the conscience of those who placed the wine before him, or of hers who held it to his lips? It could not to mine. There would be a constant, endless whisper of "murdered" in my ear, sinking to the very depth of my heart. I would sooner be the stricken little Allie, or Abner, cold and dead, than be either of the hospitable hosts, who, for the sake of one soul, could not give up a social custom, or the vain girl whose thoughtlessness or indifference, to say the least, won him to death.

A CHRISTMAS BOX.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

THREE little faces were pressed close to the window, watching with eager interest the great brown stone house across the way.

There were little children at the windows of that house, too; bright, beautiful, rosy, merry little ones they were, so different to those in the humble frame opposite, who, pinched and pale and sad, had a wistful look in their sweet eyes as they saw the happiness of those they were watching.

"Oh! ain't it jolly for them? And ain't it nice to be rich, and have lots of friends?" exclaimed little Georgie, who for the time forgot his own dreariness in seeing the joy of his neighbors.

"Oh, yes, indeed. That big box is full as ever it can be with goodies and dolls, ain't it, Georgie?" said little Evie, as the expressman, with the assistance of a servant, carried in a large box.

"Christmas *is* grand over the way. I know that boy will have a gun, and a sword, and a drum. Oh, mamma, mamma, will Christmas ever come so to us?" Georgie asked, with a longing look in his great blue eyes.

The mother's lips quivered, tears filled her eyes, and for a moment she could not answer. Georgie saw his words had made his darling mother sad, and springing into her

lap, he clasped his arms about her neck, and pressing kisses upon her pale face, said:

"We don't mind if we are not rich, mamma! Do we, girls? We can wait for a good time, until I get to be a big man. Then, mamma, we will have it. Don't cry; please, don't."

The mother forced back her tears, saying:

"My little man, as long as my darlings are well and with me, I am content. But, oh, I do wish some one would send my little ones something to make their Christmas merry."

"Mamma, God won't forget us. Oh, I'm sure he won't. Something good will come to us, I think. If I could only get well—I mean, if I could run about with the other children—that would be the best thing I could have for my Christmas," said May—lovely, patient little May. She was an angelic child. Hopelessly crippled since infancy, never playing with other children, she was, when only eight years old, so full of thoughts beautiful, good and wise, that her mother felt she was not long for earth. And though from her suffering and loveliness she was dearer than the others to the mother's heart, she often felt as if she must loosen her clasping arms from about her darling, and let her flee away where she could wander about with the little ones, in the home where all the suffering children grow well and happy.

Mary Grayson stole quietly out while the little ones were prattling. Dropping on her knees beside her bed, she wept bitterly.

Oh, how hard it was to have those little ones really suffering for the comforts she could never give them! May, most of all, needed little delicacies. Oh, would better days never come to them?

Three years before, her husband, having saved sufficient

to support his little family for two years, had left them, going with a party to Australia, promising to be home with a little fortune in two years. The time rolled slowly by, but he came not, nor one word since of him. The little money left was all gone, and Mary and her little ones were living on the small amount procured by her needle.

"It snows! it snows! Now, mamma, fix me up as warm as you can. I'm going to run across the way to the big house, and ask them to let me clear off their pavement when it has done snowing. I'll be in time. Oh, if I could only get ten pavements to clear off, I'd have lots of money; more than enough for a turkey!" exclaimed Georgie, his eyes dancing with great expectation.

"Ten pavements to clear off with these poor little hands! Why, little love, that will be work enough for a great strong man," the mother said.

As she wrapped the warm scarf about his neck, and buttoned the well-patched coat over the brave little heart, she thanked God for the great blessing he was.

"My love, have you noticed those little faces at the window across the street?" asked Philip Austin, the owner of the brown stone house, and pretty bright children in it.

"Not particularly. Why?" returned Mrs. Austin.

"Well, to me they have a very touching expression. Now look! See how they watch this house!"

"Papa, the boy that is most all the time with them has just gone down from our door," said Willie Austin.

"Ring the bell, and inquire what he wanted, my dear," said Mr. Austin.

Another moment and a servant entered. Mrs. Austin made the desired inquiry.

The man, smiling, answered:

"He wanted to engage clearing off the pavement, when the snow has stopped falling."

"Poor little fellow! And what did you say to him, James?" added Mr. Austin.

"I laughed at him, and told him he had better go down on the wharf and engage in helping to unload vessels, sir," replied the man.

"You ought not to have spoken to him so, James. Poor child! I wish you had let me know of his being here."

"Yes, papa, you would not have let him go away with such a sad face, I know," said Willie.

"James, keep a look-out for him. Tell him to come and help you, and pay him well. He is a manly little fellow, and I think would rather work than receive money without."

"Yes, sir," James answered.

Mr. Austin, turning to his wife, said:

"I wish, my dear, either to-day or to-morrow, so it may reach them by Christmas day, you would make up a basket or box of such things as will please, and comfort, too, those little ones, and send it over with the kind wishes of ours."

"Oh, yes, yes, *do*, mamma. How nice it will be!" the children exclaimed.

Just then a carriage stopped before the house, from which a gentleman sprang out, and ran quickly up the steps. Willie sang out:

"Uncle Charley! Hurrah! Uncle Charley has come!"

Another moment, and a handsome, middle-aged man entered the room, catching first Mrs. Austin, and then the little ones, in a loving embrace.

In the joy of Uncle Charley's coming, the little ones

across the street were quite forgotten for that day; and the next, Mrs. Austin was so busy with preparations to make Christmas day one of more than usual rejoicing, in honor of Uncle Charley's return, that she had no time to think of the poor little ones. Once Willie exclaimed:

"Oh, mamma, you have not sent over the presents to those little children."

Mrs. Austin was annoyed at the reminder, but said:

"Dear me! I had quite forgotten. There are so many really necessary calls on my time and memory, I can hardly be expected to remember such things. But to-morrow will do just as well. I'll go out this evening and purchase some little presents for them."

Christmas morn dawned brightly. What a merry set of little ones the Austins were! Scarcely any breakfast was eaten. They could not spare the time from the beautiful and almost countless presents—presents from papa, mamma, Uncle Charley, aunts, cousins and friends innumerable.

The youngest of them, Lilly, a little three-year-old fairy, stood on a chair arranging her doll at the window for passers to admire. Presently she sang out in a pretty, lisping voice:

"Oh, Willie, come see! Is that a Christmas box?"

Willie bounded to the window. A moment, and he cried out:

"Oh, no, no! It's a little coffin."

All hastened to the window then, with awed and solemn faces. After a few moments Mr. Austin said:

"My dear, did you send over some things to those little ones?"

"Oh, no; I intended to this morning. I thought it

would be just as well. I have had so much to think of," answered Mrs. Austin, in a tone of regret.

"*Too late* now to comfort *one* of them," Mr. Austin said, sorrowfully.

Yes, too late to comfort little May.

For three or four days previous to Christmas she had failed much, grown visibly weaker. When the dawn of that blessed day came she cried out:

"Mamma, I'm *so* glad! I'll soon be well! See—I can stand up!"

For a second she stood up on her feet—her hands clasped—an expression of unearthly joy on her beautiful, pale face.

The mother sprang forward, clasped her arm around and drew back to her bosom only May's little lifeless body.

Scarcely had she laid tenderly down the loved form when Georgie's Christmas greeting reached her ear:

"May, May, where are you? See! here is your Christmas wreath!"

He ran joyously in. The smiles fled—a frightened look from the pale, cold face to his mother, so tearful and sad, and Georgie cried:

"What is the matter, mamma? Won't May wake up?"

In vain she tried to comfort him, and explain how happy May was, away with the angel children. But Georgie could only understand that May was gone from them; and burying his little face in the pillow on which her dear head rested, he wept himself to sleep.

A shadow had stolen over the merry folks of Austin house. The children watched with anxious faces the closed window where their little neighbors used to sit, and wondered for which the little coffin was.

Mrs. Austin's pleasure was marred, for a great regret was in her heart. Constantly came the thought:

"If I only had remembered those poor little ones!"

"It is never too late to do right and good. Send to the children left, and inquire if we may do anything to help them in their trouble. Do you know their names, my dear?" said Mr. Austin.

"Grayson, I believe. I think she is a widow—"

"Grayson!" exclaimed Uncle Charley. "Tell me more of them."

"The little fellow told me his papa had gone to Australia, and—"

Ere Willie had finished his story Uncle Charley was crossing the street, to the great astonishment of his sister and brother-in-law.

Two hours passed before he returned. Then he told them that the father of these little ones was his dearest friend; that his return home was principally to find George Grayson's widow and children, and bear to them the little fortune he had made.

"And I must pay to those he loved the debt of gratitude I owed to him," said Uncle Charley. "He nursed me through the fever, and when all others pronounced me dead, he still worked on, and with God's blessing saved me."

"And his loved ones so near to me, and so needy! Oh, if I had only known it!" said Mrs. Austin.

And when her brother told more of those little ones, particularly of the *only* Christmas gift which came to little May—the Christmas wreath that Georgie had given her—and which was then lying on her little coffin, Mrs. Austin shed tears of regret for her neglect.

"Oh, I wish I had sent them something. I might have contributed to make a little more comfortable the

last days of that little one's life. But I forgot," she said.

And when constantly came the thought of little May's only gift, the beautiful wreaths and garlands which decorated her rooms seemed to lose their bright, cheerful look. Everything was darkened by the heavy cloud which shadowed her heart that Christmas day.

That *our* happiness be not clouded thus, nor the beautiful Christmas wreaths lose to us their cheering aspect, we will remember *some* little ones within our reach, if not across the street, whose friends are so few, and whose wants are so many.

HER OWN SWEET WILL.

A THANKSGIVING STORY.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

I HAD been taught that the Osborns were a very disagreeable set, and I must never play on their pavement, nor look into their windows as I passed the house. Now you all know how very tempting and sweet is forbidden fruit. So the windows of the Osborn house were the only ones in the whole street I cared to look into.

From my window I could see so well the one opposite, where so often sat a handsome youth. When I was only ten, he was about fifteen. He sat at his studies, and I was always studying, too—but my subject was ever the same, the youth across the way, and wondering why I could not laugh and talk to him, as to a dozen others in our street.

When fourteen years old, I was sent away to school. When I came home for the vacation, of course all my acquaintances came to welcome my return.

A general favorite, and mamma's particular one, Charley Nelson, gave me a complimentary entertainment. During the evening, he said:

"I invited Herbert Osborn to come over, but he declined. How strange, Fannie, that you do not know him! But he does not seem to care much for ladies' society."

Just then May Foster came up and said:

"Charley, do go over, and try to bring Herbert over here with you!"

Charley looked at me for instructions. But mamma stood near, and having heard the whole conversation, said, in her usually calm but very decided way:

"No, Charley, I do not wish Fannie to increase her list of acquaintances."

Then turning to May, she said kindly:

"Excuse me for disappointing you, May, dear, but it would not be agreeable."

Oh, how my hopes were crushed then! I had thought to meet Herbert during the vacation.

So two years more rolled by, and then I came home to remain; school days were over. I was seventeen. And, strange to tell, had had no romantic attachment that had ever been heard of. How the girls marvelled! Ah! but could they have looked way down into my heart, they would have seen the image of some one enshrined there.

The next winter mamma's health was very feeble, and my sister came home to stay for a while. Her husband's business was in a neighboring city, so he could often be with us. The gloom that had gathered over our home since mamma's illness was soon chased away by the merry voices and winning little ways of the children. There were three of them—the oldest a boy, Frank, who was a very apt scholar in all mischief. Katy was a matter-of-fact, truthful little thing of six years, and had the most implicit faith in everything Frankie said.

But Susie, the youngest, the pet, the darling of the house, was very different. I have often marvelled at the perseverance and determination of that little four-year-old fairy child.

One morning Frank came, bringing Susie in screaming

kicking and scratching; and resigning her to my arms, said:

"Only think! She was standing over at the Osborns' window, *talking* to them! Those horrid folks!"

"I know they are nice, good folks, and I *will* go again—many times. Now, sir!"

Frankie went off to tell his mother, and returned with her. He stated the case, and after explaining to Susie how wrong it was, her mamma said:

"Now, dear, you will not go again, will you?"

"I told them I would come—and *'deed* I will, too!" The words came slow, distinct, and in a determined tone.

I saw sister turn aside to smile. I knew she was proud of that spirited little love, and pleased with that trait of truthfulness in her character, although she was going to chide.

"But, Susie, they are not pleasant folk. I do not know them, and do not wish you to. You must never go again."

"*I do* know them, mamma; and 'deed they are nice, and I must go, mamma!"

During the days of mother's illness there was less time for watching Susie. I knew she was over, and often in with the Osborns, and I was glad of it.

After a while neither father, sister, nor even Frankie, felt like scolding. All thoughts save of love and kindness were awed to silence. Mother had gone from us.

Susie and father grew nearer to each other after that. He loved her best, I think, because she bore our mother's name. They were almost inseparable. Yet a little while, each day, she would slip away; I knew where.

Thanksgiving was near—only four days off. Sister was with the cook, superintending the cake and pie making.

Passing by the kitchen, I was attracted by hearing Henny, the cook, exclaim:

"Dat chile ain't made for dis yer yerth: mine I tell you!"

Stepping in to know what Susie had said, or done, to call forth the exclamation from Henny, I saw sister was annoyed by the remark; so I said:

"Why, Henny, if the good Lord took all the smart and good children away, I think this earth would be a poor place to remain in, with only stupid and bad people to keep company with each other. But what has she been saying?"

"She is insisting I shall give her a pie, and some cake, to carry over to those people across the street! It will never do! What would they think? Indeed, Susie, I cannot, dear!" said sister.

"Mamma, indeed you will. Don't you know there is a grandma over there? like the grandma of mine that's gone away? Grandma Osborn"—my sister really groaned out at that—"might go away too, and see ours up there!" And here Susie looked up with such an angelic expression, and pointed with her dear little finger, which made me think of Henny's recent exclamation, and involuntarily I caught her in my arms. For a instant she stopped, and looking at me in surprise, kissed me, and went on talking:

"And wouldn't you like our grandma to hear from us, and know we are good and nice to everybody? *Please* give me the cake and pie?"

Who could resist the darling? Ah! how truly she was touching all hearts then! Father had heard the last appeal, and coming in, he caught Susie up and said:

"You shall have them, pet. Give them to her, Anna. How strange to be taught by a baby's will!" And then

heard him murmur, "Unless ye become as one of these;" and again, "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

The cake and pie were fixed for her. Taking up the pie, she tried to hold it with one tiny hand—thinking to manage the cake with the other. In vain she tried, first one, and then the other. Wearied at last, she turned and said:

"Henny, *you* may help me! My hands ain't strong. They get tired too soon. Susie's tired too, now."

Henny returned, and said they wanted Susie to stay a while.

A couple of hours passed, when some one rang. Henny was busy, and thinking it was probably the servant bringing Susie home, I opened the door, and there before me stood Herbert Osborn, with Susie in his arms. With perfect ease he placed the sleeping child in mine, and said:

"We fear she is sick. She fell asleep in my arms; and I did not wish to disturb her, so I brought her myself. She has considerable fever, and mother is very anxious. You will excuse me, but Susie has grown very dear to us. And mother bade me say, she thinks a physician should be consulted immediately."

What with fright and surprise, I could scarcely utter the simple, "Thank you, sir," as he bowed and left me.

All that night and the next day she was unconscious, raving in fever, and calling first one and then another of the Osborn family. Oh, that fearful, terrible fever! It raged on until Thanksgiving morn. The doctor shook his head, he could not speak his fear.

She lay so still, so pale, we could scarcely tell she breathed. She was sleeping; and when our doctor came again, he said:

"When she awakes she will know us, I think."

It was a glorious day, so balmy and bright that we sat

with the windows opened, through which came the sounds of the Thanksgiving anthem from the church near by.

I think the music aroused the little sleeper. After a slight movement, she opened her sweet eyes, and murmured:

"Mamma!"

A grateful smile beamed on our doctor's face, and he fervently said:

"Thank God!"

And every heart echoed his prayer.

During the day she whispered, feebly trying to raise her little arms:

"Please take me across the street?"

Again and again she repeated the petition.

"We must have them here," the doctor said. And Susie's papa was sent to ask them to come.

Father met and welcomed them. By Susie's bedside their hands were clasped in reconciliation and thanksgiving.

I thought our darling's eyes lingered longer, beamed with a light of deeper love, when she met those of Herbert, and murmuring:

"Susie's glad, now; *so glad!*" she sank to a sleep, sweet and refreshing.

The old folk came frequently during the days of her convalescing, but Herbert came no more. Every day, however, he sent fruit, flowers, and little tokens of his love and kindness.

When Susie grew strong enough, father carried her in his arms across the street.

A little longer, and with her hand clasped in mine, we walked on the pavement. One afternoon, while thus engaged, Susie's bright eyes spied Herbert at his window. She called to him, putting out her little hands. In a

moment more he was with us. Between us, her hands clasped by each, she walked along, chatting merrily, when suddenly she stopped, and exclaimed:

"Oh! see that beautiful pigeon—no, bird! I'll get it!"

Then, loosening her hand from mine, she still held Herbert's, and turning to me, she said:

"Here, Aunt Fannie, hold Herbert's hand, and keep him until I come back. Hold him tight, or he might run away!"

She laughed, and trotted across the street.

Our hands were clasped a moment. His eyes sought mine. An eager, searching look, and each had found the long-hidden truth! Each heart had awakened and was rejoicing in its new life when Susie returned, bearing in her arms a white dove. And then Herbert said that he had bought it that day for her. He supposed it must have escaped from the cage in which he brought it home; and turning to me, he continued:

"She always reminds me of the white dove. Our darling! how gently she has won and conquered all hearts!"

When we returned to the house, Herbert went in with us. As we entered the sitting-room, the dove flew from Susie and nestled on father's bosom. And she, our little bird of love and peace, went, and pillowing her sunny head there too, whispered:

"Grandpa, Herbert gave us this dove. Won't you love him? I do; and so does Fannie. Don't she, Herbert?"

And thus this little chattering bird forced Herbert to tell father how dear I was to him, before I had given leave, except by my eyes.

The next Thanksgiving we were married. Susie was decidedly the belle of the evening; and indeed Herbert was so devoted in his attentions to her, that Father Osborn said laughingly:

"Fannie, you'll have a formidable rival there. Susie holds a large portion of Herbert's heart."

"Indeed she does, and of other hearts too. How can it be otherwise? Our little dove of peace! But for her, my wooing would have been a stormy one, I think," answered Herbert.

Thus the old feud was ended. I sometimes wish it could have been before mamma was taken from us. But looking at Herbert's mother, Susie's words, "May be she will go away soon and see our grandma," comes to my mind. And then I think their hands will clasp, in reconciliation and love, very soon now. And together they will watch for their children's coming.

Since then our Thanksgiving days have memories peculiarly touching and sweet. Others would have theirs grow yearly happier, should they mark them by some act of love and charity—reconciliations offered, and forgiveness fully given and gladly received.

FATE FIXED IT.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"WELL, sir, I've been waiting for your answer until my patience is quite exhausted."

"Uncle, I've not answered again, only because I regret to offend or disappoint you. I can only reiterate my determination."

"Confusion, sir, I want none of your sentimental nonsense! 'Marry *only* for love!'—'a wife whose only dower is her pure, true heart!' Very pretty, sir, to read about; very beautiful in theory. But I had hoped a little good sound sense from *my* nephew. I say, sir, because a girl is rich, has plenty of gold and land, is *that* any reason why she should not be loved?"

"By no means, uncle. But if I were to accede to your wishes, money, not love, is the first, greatest, and in fact, the sole inducement for your nephew to seek Miss Leighton—"

"Silence, sir! 'Tis not so. She is the daughter of my old friend; and we promised you to each other when you were little more than babies. Come, now, Guy, be a sensible boy, and do as I bid you!"

"Uncle, uncle, I cannot. I should lose all my self-respect without winning the respect of my future wife, were I to—"

"Then, sir, you are my nephew no longer! I'll cut you off with a shilling! I'll find some one else to leave my money to! Or endow a lunatic asylum. But that would be providing a place for *you*, you ungrateful young rascal!"

"Uncle, I am *not* ungrateful! And as to your money, leave it where you choose. But your affection, I do value. Do not cast me from your heart, uncle," Guy Eversfield said, approaching his uncle, with extended hands.

"Words, words, mere words, sir. I want actions. Now, upon my honor as a gentleman, unless you will try to win Miss Leighton, you shall never cross my threshold again. Do you understand, sir?"

Guy looked intently for a moment into his uncle's face. It was not as he often had seen it, flushed and heated by a passion which, soon passing away, found him still the same kind, indulgent old uncle. There was no mistaking the cool determination. And he answered:

"I *do*, sir."

"Well, sir?"

"Good-morning, sir. I am sorry to part thus."

Guy's handsome face was very pale as he turned away. He knew it would be useless to say more—even to put out his hand for a farewell clasp.

"Thank Heaven! I have health and strength. I can go to work. And, thanks to my dear mother's thoughtful care, I have enough money to keep me, with economy, until I can make money myself. Dear mother! Little did she think, when putting aside from her own scantily-filled purse 'something for her boy to do with as he chose,' how much I would need it. I'll go immediately and accept Morris's offer. Go into his office, do his writing, and study with him. In two years I can be admitted to the bar. I've no doubt of making a living. And—bless her sweet face!—*she* will not care for riches. My beautiful

darling! There is no doubt about it. I am in love as sure as ever was a fellow, and with a girl whose name I do not even know—perhaps, never shall. Well, this is the street where she got out. I will hunt for her again."

Five weeks before, while walking on —— avenue, Guy met his fate. He had noticed first the little figure before him, clothed in deep mourning. Then the bright golden hair that fell from beneath the little hat, and rested on the sable wrapping. He was thinking how very graceful she was, and wondering if her face was as beautiful as her hair and figure; and if he was to hurry forward a few steps, ahead of her, would she think him very rude if he turned to catch just one glimpse? He had about made up his mind to risk it, when fortune favored him. A little girl, barefoot, and looking generally miserable, came quickly by; touching the maiden, she cried, holding towards her a basket:

"Do, pretty lady, buy my flowers! Just *one* little bunch!"

Never had Guy seen a lovelier face than the one that turned to look at the little flower-girl.

Hastening forward, ostensibly to buy a bouquet, he stood beside the beautiful girl.

She had selected a little bunch of violets, and putting her hand in her pocket she hesitated. A startled look came into her eyes, as she said:

"I have lost my pocket-book; or—or some one has stolen it. I'm most sorry for your sake, poor child!"

In an instant Guy came to her relief.

"Permit me," he said, handing his well-filled wallet.

"Thank you, sir," she returned with a beautiful blush. "If you will buy some of her flowers it will answer as well," returning the bunch of violets to the basket, she was moving away, when Guy caught up the violets and tossing a note into the basket, he said:

"These are the only flowers I care to keep."

"But, oh, sir, you have given me *much* too much!"

"Not for *these*, little one," Guy answered, smiling, and passing on.

The child darted forward to overtake the beautiful girl and tell her of her good fortune, and she turning again to the child's touch, Guy was made happy by another look. He raised his hat. She could not mistake the respectful and admiring gaze. With a smile, a slight inclination of the graceful head, she passed on.

He would not follow, as much as he desired to know more of her; and he had never met her since, although certainly not less than twenty-five times had he walked up one side of the street and down the other.

Seated on a porch just outside of the library was Lewis Brewster, another nephew of Mr. Eversfield. He had heard every word of the conversation of his uncle with Guy, and rejoiced at the conclusion.

"Now is my chance, if I'm not mistaken," he said, "for either the rich wife or my uncle's fortune. Indeed, perhaps both. I hardly think, however, that the old gent will hold out against Guy. He has a strange hold on his heart. My father he never loved, while Guy's he did love more than all the world. What he has done for me was all on account of public opinion. He did not dare to cast his sister's son off entirely, so he gave me an education, and to understand that was all he should do for me. I must either now spend the best of my life in working for my daily bread, or find a rich wife. I much prefer the latter."

Looking through the blinds he saw his uncle about leaving the room. Another moment, and the hall-door closed after him.

"Now, how am I to find my little jewel? The name I have. Now let me think. Ah!—yes! I will look in the directory."

Entering the library, he went up to his uncle's desk. His face brightened, and he exclaimed:

"I am in luck! Here is my lady's, or rather her mamma's card—Mrs. Leighton, No. 120 West —— street. I'll do that street to-morrow from morning until night. If I get a glimpse at my little lady I will make her notice me."

The next day was Sunday. Thinking Miss Leighton would surely be going to church, Lewis Brewster, faultlessly dressed, began to traverse the street on which the heiress lived. Fortune, indeed, seemed continually smiling on him. When he had gotten almost opposite her dwelling the door opened, and a very handsomely dressed young girl stepped out. Hastening across, he ascended the marble steps, and with the most graceful bow possible, inquired if Mr. Green lived there.

He had not overestimated his powers of attraction, for certainly the young girl smiled very sweetly when she answered, "No, sir." Nor did she seem anxious to dismiss him. The result was quite a little conversation; and when Lewis said "Good-morning," he breathed a little sigh, and raised his handsome dark eyes very pleadingly to hers, and went away.

"Oh, dear! but *isn't* he just perfectly splendid? I wonder what he meant by sighing and looking at me so? Certainly, if I was to see him many times, my heart wouldn't be my own long. *Many* times! I declare, I'm not certain but it's only half with me now. I hope I shall see him again. I wonder who he is."

While the young girl was thus thinking of Lewis, he was deeply engaged with thoughts of her.

"Well done for you, Brewster," he said. "You are all

right now. Well, the girl *is* pretty. She'll do. There is a golden lustre about her that will more than compensate for actual beauty. She is not difficult material to work upon. If I mistake not, she will enjoy a little romantic affair—a runaway match. However, to-morrow I shall be able to decide better."

The day following Lewis saw her at the window. A smile, a bow, given and returned. Another day, and they met to meet again and again, many succeeding days.

"If I dared to ask you, sir, how dearly I would love to. But—but—you know—" she was saying, when Lewis, interrupting her embarrassing apology, said:

"Yes, yes, I know, dear one, that your mamma is keeping you very close. She is anxious to give you to a man who cares nothing for you. And if you are forced to marry him, it will be a terrible sacrifice—a *financial affair!*"

The girl's eyes were full of astonishment. She said quickly:

"Oh, you are mistaken, I am not—"

"Heaven grant I am—and that you will not yield to their persuasions. If you should—" His voice trembled. He could not speak for a moment—and then with quivering lips and choking voice, he said: "Then, what will become of me?"

Well, it needed but little more to be said, and it was settled that he was to become her husband.

Guy Eversfield had been less fortunate in finding his love. The weeks rolled into months, yet he saw her no more. He had almost despaired, when one evening he was returning from a business tour to P——; the cars were unusually crowded. At one of the way-stations the conductor entered the car with a lady. Guy had noticed that there was not a vacant seat. Ever gallant, he stepped out

and with winning grace offered his. The lady raised her veil—and Guy could scarcely restrain an exclamation of joy as he beheld the lovely girl who had occupied his thoughts for many weeks. Although no sound escaped his lips his eyes spoke plainly the glad surprise. With a faint blush, a smile, and bow of thanks and recognition, she accepted the seat. The conductor suggested a seat in the smoking-car, but Guy preferred to linger near.

He was not going to lose sight of his love again so soon. A fat old gentleman sat beside her; Guy was getting quite desperate when the conductor called out, "Passengers for C——;" and the old gent, jumping up, hurried out.

Guy lost no time in presenting himself beside the fair girl, and asking:

"Will you permit me?"

In response to her smiling assent he seated himself, and said, in his frank, charming way:

"I cannot feel that we are strangers."

She could not withstand his earnest, honest look, and answered:

"*Fate*, it seems, has decided we shall not be."

Immediately Guy handed his card.

An exclamation of surprise half escaped her lips, and her color deepened. She continued to look at the card for a moment. Then turning to Guy, she said:

"Your name is familiar to me, Mr. Eversfield. I have met your uncle at Mrs. Leighton's. My name is Mira Lester."

When they arrived at P——, Guy was delighted to find Miss Lester's friends were not at the depot to meet her. He was hurrying off to obtain a carriage, when she stopped him to say:

"I would prefer to walk; the distance is short, and the evening delightfully pleasant. I am staying with Mrs. Leighton, —— street."

On the way, Guy told of his fruitless attempts to see her again; and when reaching her destination, he asked permission to call.

Miss Lester told him she had been absent ever since the morning after they first met. In answer to his request to call, she said:

"Mr. Eversfield, I am companion to Mrs. Leighton. She is an invalid, and my time is very much engaged with her. Even were it not so, ought not your call rather to be on Miss Leighton?"

"Ah! I see you have heard the story of Miss Leighton and myself being pledged to each other in our childhood! I have never seen her to remember; and with all due respect to the young lady, I am not anxious to. Miss Leighton and myself can never be more than now. A few days after meeting you, I gave my uncle to understand this. Well, he sent me forth. I've not seen him since."

Mira understood that she had influenced his decision, and she said:

"You were hasty, Mr. Eversfield. You should have seen Miss Leighton. You might have grown to—"

Guy interrupted her, saying:

"Never! Then it could not be. The very idea of Miss Leighton was hateful to me. Without a sigh I accepted my uncle's decision, and shall with joy resign a fortune, if, by so doing, I can win a heart of my own choosing."

They had reached Mrs. Leighton's door, and when Guy had touched the bell, he said:

"I will not ask to enter to-night. It is late, and you are tired. But to-morrow. May I?"

"*Au revoir*," she answered, with a beautiful smile.

And Guy knew that his plea was granted.

When, the next evening, Guy entered Mrs. Leighton's, he was not surprised that he passed the spacious and elegant drawing-room, and was ushered into a cosy little

sitting-room. He felt far happier with little Mira Lester there than he could possibly have done with the mistress of the mansion, surrounded by all the magnificence in her apartments.

Mira soon knew that she had won the true and devoted love of a noble man; that for love of her he would gladly put aside all the luxury and ease that he had been accustomed to, and accept a life of toil and privation. Yet there were many misgivings in her heart as she listened to his words of love.

"Ah, you know so little of me—of my family. I believe you love me; but when the stern realities of life are before you, may you not regret?" she said.

"Never—never!" Guy answered, fervently, clasping the little hand closer in his.

"Will you always love me as now?" she whispered, low.

"Never less, dear one, and more and more as the years grow many with us."

"Guy," she said, her beautiful eyes filled with tears, "I have a widowed mother; she needs my support."

"And mine, my own," he answered.

"Guy," her hand was on his shoulder, her heart eagerly searching his—"Guy, you may be disappointed—you *will*. My mother is employed here, in this house; you—"

"Oh, my love, why *will* you fill your heart with doubts? Your mother is my mother, and where'er I find her, in 'palace hall or lowly cot,' hers is the post of honor, for she is the mother of my queen!"

"Then come to her."

Mira led Guy through a little hall, and opening the door, ushered him into a very handsomely furnished room. A gentle, delicate-looking woman reclined in an invalid's chair.

Guy's eyes were full of astonishment. But he drew near, and taking the extended hand, raised it to his lips, saying:

"Mother—Mira has given me permission to call you so—will you give us your blessing on our love?"

"Right willingly, my dear son," she said; "and there is somebody over there who will join his blessing with mine, I'm sure."

Guy had not noticed the gentleman seated on the other side of the apartment.

He turned, and Guy exclaimed:

"Uncle!" turning his inquiring gaze from one to another.

"Yes, 'uncle,' you young rascal—no, you dear boy! Yes, God bless you—both of you!" Mr. Eversfield said, clasping Guy and Mira in one embrace.

"I—I cannot understand," Guy began saying.

And Mira, turning her pleading eyes to his, said:

"Oh, forgive me, Guy—"

"Forgive! Nothing of the kind. Bless, rather. 'Pon my soul, if I am not crying, when this is the happiest day of my life!"

"Ah! my boy, Fate wove her web about you. This dear girl is Miss Leighton—"

"Then whom, in Heaven's name, is *this* girl?" cried out Lewis Brewster, who had entered the room just then, holding by the hand a pale and trembling girl.

"Forgive me! Oh, forgive me, Lewis!" the girl sobbed.

And Mr. Eversfield exclaimed:

"What is all this about? What *does* it mean?"

"It means, sir, that this girl married me under false pretences. I believed *her* Miss Leighton," Lewis answered, angrily.

"Ah, ha! Indeed! And *now* you find out you have married the maid instead of the mistress! Serves you right! But *she* is too good for you!"

"I—I—It is not legal, sir! I will not stand to it! I was deceived!" Lewis continued.

"Oh, I tried to tell you once, but you would not let me. You *would* call me Miss Leighton. And I feared to lose you. I loved you! Indeed I did!"

"Poor girl! You are to be pitied. And *you*, sir—did you not deceive her with pretences of *true* love? Bah! were it not for her, I would pitch you out of the window! She is your wife! And look to it, sir! I will not have *my* niece treated with any disrespect, even by her husband. There, child, dry your tears. I will take you with me until your husband finds a home for you. You, sir, had better try and win the same position that you occupied an hour ago in your wife's heart. Go, now!"

Crestfallen and sullen, Lewis left the room and house. But he returned to his senses in a few days, and preparing a home for his bride, took her to it, declaring, at any rate, she was the handsomest girl he knew, and looked the lady every inch.

When the door closed after Lewis Brewster and his wife, Mira turned quickly, and said:

"Guy, I meant not to continue this deception. When I first found out your name—I hardly know why—I only gave you part of mine; unless—" here her sweet face was covered with blushes—"I liked you well enough, even then, to be anxious to have Miss Leighton become less hateful to you. I would have told you when you first called, but your uncle made me promise not. Am I forgiven?"

"Don't speak of forgiveness, dear love," Guy said. "This is the happiest day of my life, and I think a special providence took my affairs in hand, and directed my wayward steps to a most happy end. But you will forgive me for saying that although I have won the heiress, she is of no greater value to me than my little love, whose only wealth, I believed, was her pure and true heart, and that, to me, was more than all the gold that earth can give."

THE MISSING KEY.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"OH, what beautiful roses! I've seen none like them this season. Where did you get them, Hal?"

The youth's face deepened to a bright hue as he looked, with a half doubtful smile, into his mother's eyes.

"Tell me who gave them to you—?"

"Nobody. Now don't scold, mother: I hooked them from old Phil Kingsley's garden—"

"Oh, my son! How could you? How mortified I am. If you were only eight or ten years old I *might* excuse—but my *almost* man to—"

"Don't, mother! Don't say *that*. I'm mortified myself now, and was directly after I took them. I did not *care* for them a straw. I'll tell you just how I came to take them. When I was going home with Millie," Hal's face flushed a little deeper just then, "we passed old Phil's. Oh, I never saw such quantities of roses. Millie stopped to admire them and wished for some. 'Just only one,' she said. Old Phil sat on his porch. I opened the gate and stepped up to him—Millie stood where he could and did see her. I asked him to give me one rose. The old bear! he growled out 'No—let them fade and scatter their leaves, I won't give them away. I *hate* women, all of them.' And with that he turned his back and went on

with his reading. I just vowed then I'd keep a *few* of them from scattering their leaves over his ground. I wonder how the flowers can bloom around such a hard-hearted old creature. Indeed, I doubt if he has any heart at all. Well, coming back I jumped the fence and helped myself. I did intend sending them to Millie, but I guess I will not. I will find some others for her—not stolen ones."

"Poor old man! He is to be pitied rather than despised, my son. He must have had some sorrow or great wrongs, and from his words I think we may have the key. Like the roses, perchance, his joys have faded; his hopes been scattered. Then his hatred to women, or rather his imagining so—"

"Oh, mother, you are too poetical in your imaginings If he has suffered, I wager it is only by the loss of gold. If he has ever had a heart, I don't think any one ever did or will find a door to it."

"Yes, my boy, the door can be opened, when some one with the key comes. I believe in every heart there is a tender chord, a spring whose waters once flowed, and may again. There, put your flowers in water and try and feel less harshly to poor old Phil."

Old Phil Kingsley had lived just where Hal saw him for twenty years and more. He kept to himself, neither visiting nor receiving visitors. One or two neighbors—the minister and the village doctor—called once, but receiving no inducement, never went again. They had ceased long since wondering about the queer man; "Old Phil," the "Bear," and the "Dragon," the boys called him; and the girls, by their mothers taught, spoke of him as "The man without a heart."

Old Phil sat, as he always did every afternoon, in his chair, on the shaded porch. The June roses had faded; their leaves were scattered all around him.

"Just so!" he murmured; "just so!"

The latch of the garden-gate clicked. Old Phil's eyes were raised. A darker scowl came over his face as he saw a woman, with a baby in her arms, walking slowly up the walk.

"John!" he called, loudly; "John!"

And an instant after his only attendant, the faithful John, who, if he had chosen, could have told what it was that made his master "queer," came out.

"Send them off, away," the master said.

John hurried out and spoke, but the woman heeded not. She moved on, slowly tottering up, and sank on the steps near to old Phil's feet.

John followed close, and caught the babe that slipped from the relaxing arms.

"Water, please," she whispered.

"She's well-nigh spent. Let her lie," John said, as he hurried off to get a glass of wine.

Back quickly he came, but too late to help her then. The poor woman had fainted. The babe had crawled quite up to old Phil's feet, and raised her eyes wonderingly to the stern, hard face. Mechanically his eyes rested on the child's. He turned them quickly away, and put forth his hand as if to push the little one off. His fingers were caught and held in a warm, tiny clasp. Again the old man's eyes met those shy, yet tender, beseeching eyes.

"The same kind; false, cruel as the grave, for all that," he said, in a hard tone. Yet his eyes softened a little and his hand was not snatched from the baby's clasp.

"Master, she may be dying, or dead! Help me here!" John said, a doubtful look on his face.

Old Phil gently put the babe aside. His face grew somewhat softened as he stooped and drew off the bonnet from the fallen head. The hair fell in long, heavy tresses about the pale face.

"Master," said John, "this looks as if we had gone back well-nigh a score and a half of years."

Old Phil answered not, but lifted the slight form, and bore it under the shade of the porch, as John hurried for pillows.

It was long ere the closed eyes opened. During which time old Phil's thoughts had flown back to a time when one as fair and young and wonderfully like this strange woman had rested in his arms.

"Nellie was given to such spells, either from overjoy, sorrow, or excitement of any kind; I used to know just what to do then." There was a look in old Phil's eyes then that John had not seen for many weary years. An angel perhaps was knocking at the long-closed door. Would it open? Was the key to be found at last?

Still with the past old Phil remained.

"The last time I saw her, she lay fainting in *his* arms. Oh! curse him! Curse—"

"Hush! master, she's coming too." The master's face had grown hard and dark again.

The woman's gaze was fixed earnestly, eagerly on old Phil's face. "Ask him to come," she whispered to John who was bending over her.

John did as she wished. His master drew near, closer, as the soft pleading eyes were raised to his.

His features were working convulsively then, as he bent down, and he asked:

"Who are you, child?"

"Mother said you would surely know me," the woman answered, putting her hand in his.

"Yes, yes, you are Nellie's child—and"—his voice was choked and husky as he asked—"And where is she?"

"Gone! Years ago, when I was a child scarce ten years old, she said some time I might find you. She wished me

to. I've a little note she wrote you a few days before she passed away. Eleven years ago, I married very young. I was an orphan, with none but distant relatives to care for me. Father was killed in the war before mother went to heaven. Often I've wanted to find you, but I could not leave my husband. I knew we should have but a short time to be together in this world. Mother told me if I should ever need a friend, I must come to you. Others said you would drive me off; but I minded them not. Mother always told me true."

Again the beautiful eyes were looking into his, wanting their answer. The key was in the lock, and turning, turning. The door yielded, flew wide open, and old Phil's arms were extended, and the weary head of Nellie's child was pillowed on the old man's bosom.

"Glory be to God!" John fervently exclaimed. "The wrath is turned aside."

"Nellie's child and mine now!" the old man said. "What are you called, dear?"

"Nellie, too, and baby is little Nell—"

"I'm glad 'tis so," he answered, taking a time-worn letter from Nellie's hand.

The eyes of Uncle Philip, as Nellie called him, were turned away, and shaded by his hand, as he read:

"DEAR PHILIP: I could not tell you then, for father's sake, why I gave you up, and gave my hand to my Nellie's father. My heart was broken, Philip. Father was old, his name, his honor, I could save. He entreated me to marry the man whose money would relieve him. Love my child and think of me. Waiting your coming in that land where all is love."

When the last roses of summer were blooming, Hal and his loved one were again passing old Phil's home. Millie

would stop to look in. Under a tree, near the old man, sat a beautiful woman, and in his arms was a baby girl. A cry of delight came from the little one.

"See, pretty lady!" pointing to Millie.

Uncle Philip arose quickly, bowed, and smiling, approached. Cutting a cluster of beautiful buds, he put them in little Nell's hand, saying:

"Give them to the lady, and ask her to come in and see mamma."

An hour after, Hal rushed into his mother's room, exclaiming:

"Can you believe it? Millie and I spent a half hour with old Phil this afternoon."

And then he told her all about it, adding:

"You were right, mother; only the key was wanting. Old Phil has a heart, and a warm, true one, too, I know, for I have the proof of it. He loves little children; he told me so; and asked me to bring them to see his little one. Yes, Uncle Philip is at peace with the whole world now. His Nellie's spirit is guiding him, drawing him to her. The boys have ceased their old cries; the girls their doubt of his having a heart. And now we only hear from all, 'Kind Uncle Phil,' 'Dear Uncle Phil.'"

THE BABY'S VICTORY.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

'Twas but for a moment, yet into that time
Was crowded th' impressions of many an hour.—MOORE.

"SURELY never was man more devoted to his lady love, or son more dutiful and affectionate to his mother, than young Mr. Argyle is to you, Hepsey Dyer. I know no blood of yours runs through his veins, so I often wonder why it is he loves you so?"

"Yes, he loves me; and well he may. He has a kind, grateful heart, my young master; and I know, whenever his eye falls on me, he is always thinking that it is for *him* I go through life a cripple.

"It is a strange story I shall tell you; one of fate, some would say, but I know better. It was superstition and villany that made Harry Argyle an orphan, and me so helpless.

"I was an orphan when Mrs. Armsfield took me to nurse her little daughter. She was a kind, indulgent mistress, and the baby girl Minnie a dear, loving child. I would willingly risk my life for either.

"Years passed on, and my little lady grew up and married. Her husband was the wealthiest man in our county. He idolized his beautiful wife, and she was as happy and merry as a bird. Mrs. Armsfield died when her daughter had been married only a few months, leaving all her prop-

erty, which was considerable, to my young mistress, her only child, who grieved continually for her mother until the little Harry was sent to comfort her. Then we soon saw her smiling and cheerful again. But, dear young lady, this did not last long. There came a severer, more heart-wringing trial for her.

"When little Harry was only six months old his father was thrown from his horse and hurt very severely; 'internally,' the doctors said. He was never well afterward; and after lingering a few weeks he died, leaving all his great wealth to his wife, to be subject entirely to her will. I have heard that his friends, who knew of his determination, and his lawyer when writing the will, remonstrated with him against it. They advised the securing of his son's interests against any event which might occur; I suppose referring to a possibility of my lady's marrying again. But no. He said 'he would give all to her. He would prove how entirely he trusted her with his son's welfare. He feared no act of hers would injure his prospects. The child's mother was the natural and proper guardian.' And so he left her when only twenty-three, so young, so beautiful, so rich!—a prize to be fought for by all the fortune-hunters far and near. She was almost alone in the world—neither parents, brother, nor sister to protect or advise her.

"I believe she loved me, next to her boy, better than any friend. There were distant cousins of her mother's, but she did not seem to care much for them.

"For three years after Mr. Argyle's death, she remained at home; never visiting; going only to church, and receiving no company but her oldest friends and near neighbors. When little Harry was nearly four years old, he grew puny and ailing, and our country doctor advised his being taken to the city to obtain the advice of a celebrated physician there.

"So we went to Baltimore, and remained several weeks with my young mistress' cousin. Ah, that was the beginning of her miserable end.

"She was thrown into a great deal of company, and very much admired. The report of her vast riches was everywhere heard. At a musical party she met a young Italian professor—a dark, wicked-looking man I thought him; but the young girls, and my lady too, thought, or pretended to think, that he was handsome. He devoted himself very much to little Harry, and the child became very fond of him. I watched him, oh, how keenly! I knew what he was after—the surest way to the mother's heart.

"One afternoon he called to attend the ladies to a picture gallery. I went with them, taking care of Harry. Among the pictures was one of a fortune-teller. They were looking at that, when the conversation turned on the subject. My young lady was always superstitious; she was very timid, afraid of spirits, and believing in tokens and signs. I never could tell how one of her education could think as she did, for, with my little knowledge, I could not believe those things she tried to make me believe.

"Poor child! That afternoon she expressed her ideas before that foreign demon, and made this remark, which I afterwards knew had sealed her fate:

"'I have never had my fortune told, through fear, for I should certainly believe and yield to it; I could not resist. If I was told I should die at a certain time, I feel quite sure I should,' she said.

"I saw the triumphant look come into the dark man's eye. He knew her weakness, and would use it against her. I do not believe, up to that time, she had ever thought much about him—never as a lover. I dared not warn her. I was afraid of putting it in her head.

"In a day or two some one proposed a picnic. I believe

it was he, but I am not sure. At any rate, all agreed, and a grove a few miles out of town was chosen.

"My young lady was merrier that day than since her husband's death.

"Late in the afternoon, just before we left for home, there came along a woman begging. Nearly all gave her some money. And then she said she would 'read the future to them.' The merry girls were delighted, and one by one she took them apart and told her lies.

"My young lady refused, the only one. I begged her not to hear what the old crone wanted to tell her.

"The girls all laughed, and called her a little coward, and then she yielded.

"I never shall forget the white, scared face she brought back to us. She seemed to have grown old in those few moments. I was very mad, and spoke my mind to the old woman.

"She gave me a look which made me remember her, yes, and recognize her, when I met her again, though in a very different position.

"After that day, the Italian was constant and persevering in his endeavors to win my young lady. Oh, how I pleaded with her! warned her against him! We went home. Soon he followed. It was no use. I saw plainly what a strong influence he was gaining over her. She no longer listened to me, but said:

"'It is *my fate*, Hepsey. The fortune-teller told me the past, the present, *all* so true; and the future will be as she said. I shall marry Signor Brignoli, and be very happy.'

"He brought many letters expressing his high standing and respectability, from the gentlemen in whose families he taught music. But what did those people know of his past life; who he had been; and what his heart was? More than all, what his motives were in seeking my lady?

"Well, well, in six months after she first met him, they were married.

"It did not take many weeks before it was plain to see my young lady was not happy. She was very much afraid of her husband, and never would have me sit and talk with her as I used to, except when he went to the city for a few days. Then her old loving way would return somewhat. I could tell well enough that I was very much in the man's way. For some reason, he wanted me off. He would find fault, order me about, and once told me to find another home. She, poor dear, said:

"'Perhaps you had better find another home, Hepsey—one where you will be happier!'

"But I was not going while there was a chance of saving her, or watching over my darling little Harry. No, no; I had been there for twenty years, and wouldn't go unless my young lady ordered me off. And she was getting so pale, thin, and feeble, I knew she was dying slowly. I should stay and see the ending of her troubles.

"He went up to the city about a year after the marriage, and brought home with him his aunt, as he called her. My young lady grew more miserable after she came. The woman placed herself at the head of the table, and indeed was the mistress, while the true one was no more than a dependent.

"Against me Madame seemed to have a real hatred. She insulted me in every way she could. It was a hard struggle to bear with her. I was often tempted to go. One day I was alone with my young lady, and she whispered, as if she was afraid of being heard, 'Stay with my child, Hepsey. Watch over him until I am gone, and then—' What she was going to say I never knew. They came in. A few days after this she was taken to her bed, never to rise again! I was kept from the room. One time

I was about making my way in with Harry, to see his mother, when the old woman came out and stopped me. She made me very angry, and I talked very plainly to her.

"She forgot herself then, and her eyes blazed. She gave me a look!—such a one as I had only seen once before. I recognized her then—she was the fortune-teller at the picnic! Her fine dress and grand airs had deceived me! All was plain enough then, but too late to benefit my dear lady. She had yielded to villany, not fate. They said the child could not come in; his mother was too ill to be agitated in any way.

"I watched every movement of the two when they were out of the room, which was never together, one remaining to keep me away. From what I could make out, she was about to make her will. A lawyer came from the city to write it. I told the old woman I was going over to a neighbor's to make a little visit, to amuse Harry with the children. She was glad enough to have me away.

"I started, took the child to the gardener, and got him to keep him out of sight a little while. He hated the foreign people, and was glad to help me.

"Watching my chance, I stole back, and hid in the library, behind the heavy curtains. They were at dinner, and I felt sure they would have to get through their work before six o'clock, as the lawyer was to go back in the cars at that hour.

"I had not long to wait. He came, with the tool who was to serve him.

"I heard him dictate the words which were to give him everything, and the guardianship of her child.

"I thought I should go mad. Oh, if I could only get in to her! But that was impossible.

"They went out. I flew to the gardener's, got my boy,

and returned to the house. When I reached there the lawyer was just going to her room. They sent for the gardener and his wife, who were the only white servants save myself about the place, to witness the will. How could I witness this wicked work going on?

"Then there came to me this thought: 'Hepsey Dyer, you must show the child to his mother. Get her to look at him, and all will be well.'

"There was a window in my lady's room, from which was a little balcony, but only to be reached through her room; her bed was directly opposite. I must get to that window.

"I caught up my boy—ran out. Fortune favored me. They had been painting the house, and the ladder used by the men stood near. I called to one of the servants, who helped me move it where I wished. I mounted, with Harry in my arms. In a moment more I stood at the window; but what was my disappointment to find the curtain closely drawn! Not a glimpse of the room was visible. Quickly I drew the outer blinds from their fastenings, and gradually pushed them until they closed, making the room of course quite dark. I thought the probability was that some one would come and draw up the curtain to get more light, and at that moment I would tap on the glass and show the child.

"I heard some one approaching. The curtain was put back. I could plainly see my dear young lady. And, oh Heaven, she was propped up, and just placing her pen on the paper! Perhaps I was too late, I thought! I flung back the blinds, rapped sharply on the glass, and placed Harry against it.

"The poor dying mother glanced towards the window, caught sight of her boy, raised her arms, and sprang forward, but falling quickly back—her life's blood flowing

over and blotting out the words which would have made my darling penniless. Yes, yes! I had served him at a dreadful cost—his mother's life! But it was better so than for her to have lived on for months in misery and fear.

"In my haste to get down the ladder, and out of the reach of those bad people, I fell, breaking my limb. I have never been able to use it but poorly since. The servant ran with the news to the neighbors, and many gathered round. I told my story, and begged the protection of them for myself and Harry, until some of her relatives should be sent for.

"There were whispers of slow poison being given to my lady. Physicians were summoned to make an examination. They found nothing to convict the people. But what looked very suspicious was, when 'twas known what the doctors were going to do, both husband and aunt disappeared, and have never been heard of since, taking with them jewels, silver, and a large amount of money!

"For years I lived in terror, thinking they might return and work us evil. Now you know why Mr. Harry cares so much for me. And you see, superstition caused my lady's death. I wish I was a law-maker. I would make the penalty of fortune-telling as severe as it was for witchcraft in olden times!"

THE NEW CINDERELLA.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"WHAT is the matter, Mabel?" said Arthur Graham to a girl he found sobbing in the garden.

"Oh, I wish I was dead! Every day I live is an age of misery. Mr. Graham, you who have so many friends cannot imagine the loneliness, the dreariness, of a life without *one* heart that loves or sympathizes with yours. Such is mine. Never is an opportunity lost where I can be taunted with my ugliness, my awkwardness. I cannot change my looks, but sometimes I try to be smart and do things which I think will please my aunt; but I always fail, and that disheartens me, and makes me cross. I will tell you a secret, Mr. Graham. You will not betray my confidence, I know. Last night, I went down to the river. Oh, it looked so beautiful, so calm and bright, that I longed to lay me down on its bosom and rest. I sprang forward. Suddenly a blindness came over me, and distinctly I heard whispered in my ear, 'Back! back! Your path is guided by a loving hand. He will remove the thorns. Wait and trust.' I knew the voice. 'Twas mother's, from the spirit land. I shall try to live on; but," and her voice sank to a whisper, "I am going to run away from here soon; to-morrow—to-night perhaps. I may find friends among strangers."

"Mabel, my child, you *must* not. If troubles you have

here, temptation, trials and suffering that you dream not of, will surround you elsewhere."

She shook her head. A determined look was in her eye and about the mouth. He saw it, and said:

"Promise me, then, that you will think well before you take that step. Take time. Wait for three days. Will you do this, Mabel? And, my child, think and know I am your friend. Perhaps—I have hoped to be nearer—and then you will have a happy home."

"Oh, no! Mira does not love me. She would not want me. How could she, so beautiful and bright, want such a dull, disagreeable, ugly girl about her? That is what they call me," she said, in a bitter tone.

"You have grown morbid, child. Mira does love you; and when away from her aunt's influence, she will be different. You will promise me to wait?"

"Yes, yes; I can endure life that much longer."

Arthur Graham moved off toward the house, his mind filled as much with thoughts of Mabel's misery as of her sister's bright, beautiful face, which he could see then looking from the drawing-room window.

Mira was eighteen; a beautiful girl truly; a perfect blonde, with laughing blue eyes, and a shower of golden ringlets. She was her aunt's pride. Mrs. Mark Mapleton delighted in chaperoning a girl who created a sensation, and Mira was the belle of every entertainment. And then Mrs. Mark had made up her mind that her niece should catch the wealthiest man in the market; and she, even then, would practice the introduction, to see how it would sound, when alone in her own room: "My niece Mrs. Arthur Graham."

Mira and Mabel were left orphans five years before, when the little beauty was thirteen, and the "Fright," as they frequently termed Mabel, was four years younger, te

the care of their mother's brother. The little Mira immediately became a universal favorite, and Mabel was considered a very disagreeable acquisition to the family.

Arthur Graham reached the house, and was cordially welcomed by the beautiful Mira. Arthur had not as yet offered her his hand, or told her he loved her; but for two months past he had been very attentive, and both Mira and her aunt had no doubt of success.

During the evening Arthur spoke of Mabel's unhappiness to her sister, and was much disappointed at her carelessness, and the apparent disposition to drop the subject.

"Oh, she has a miserable, unhappy disposition! It is of no use to worry about her," she said.

Later in the evening, when the going to the May ball was talked of, he asked:

"Is Mabel going?"

Mira's reply was a little modification of her aunt's to Mabel, with the remark, "You seem very much interested in her."

"She is your sister," he said, earnestly.

This reply produced mingled emotions of pleasure and mortification in Mira's bosom, and she said to herself, "Yes, he loves me. But I must be more cautious; his tone implied displeasure, I think."

* * * * * * *

They were all off to the ball but poor Mabel, who sat with her foot on the baby's cradle, and her little fingers busy with some piece of sewing.

She was thinking of her promise to Arthur Graham, and on the morrow the three days would be out, and her mind was unchanged. She would go away.

There was a ring at the bell. The servants were all gone too, except the cook, who was asleep in the kitchen. Mabel thought she was tired, and so she would not arouse her.

Putting down her work, she went and opened the door.

"Is Mrs. Mapleton in?" inquired a pleasant-looking old lady, who stood on the step.

Her face was one that inspired immediate respect and confidence; so Mabel, after saying her aunt was not home, invited the stranger in.

In fifteen minutes Mabel was talking to her as if she had known her for years. The dear, motherly woman! The poor girl felt as she had not for years. She opened her heart, and her listener felt its sorrows.

"You are truly a little Cinderella, my child. Would you not rejoice if a fairy godmother would turn up?" said the old lady.

"No, not just that; but oh! I do wish for just somebody to love me, that I could work for, and that would encourage and smile on me—that is all."

"Child, I am poor. I have nothing that is not given me. I have no child. Would you come with me?"

"To work for you? To help you in every way? To keep you from being lonesome? Do you mean so?" asked Mabel, her face growing brighter as she spoke.

"Yes, yes, child; and to give up all luxuries like these," she said, waving her hand toward the elegant appointments of the room.

The words whispered in her ear at the moment of her terrible temptation came back to Mabel's mind, and she thought, "God has sent me this friend."

"I will go with you gladly, gladly! I care not for riches. I want love and kindness. *I* can work; *you* shall no more. Can you love one as ugly as I am?"

"We will see. Will you come now?"

"I cannot desert this little babe. Her mother left her to my care. I must stay until she, my aunt, returns.

Then it will be very late. But in the morning, very early, before any one is up, I will come, if you please."

"Very well; I will meet you at the corner," the old lady said, rising to leave.

As the door closed on her, she murmured:

"Faithful! grateful! wishing for nothing more than kindness and love. She is of the right metal. I shall do well!"

It was to a home where only the necessaries of life were found, that Mabel's new friend carried her. In two rooms, in a very remote part of that great city, they lived.

Mabel was always busy. Besides the little household duties, there was their daily bread to earn. Stitch, stitch, stitch, from morning to night, her needle she plied, growing daily happier. With a keen eye the old lady watched her, to detect the approach of regret. But her face was calm; no shade of care was there; the old dark, and at times sullen look, was gone. Her eyes grew bright, and snatches of merry song, in bird-like warbles, escaped her lips.

"My fairy godmother, indeed, you are!" she would often say, in a voice of deep gratitude.

* * * * * * *

Four years rolled by. During the first month after Mabel's disappearance, Arthur Graham, discovering how entirely selfish Mira was, crushed the love he bore her, and, to both Mrs. Mapleton's and her niece's great disappointment, he ceased to visit the house.

A short time after, he sailed for Europe. Mira had many admirers, but none had been considered worthy, I suppose. At any rate, she was still unmarried.

A new star had arisen in the fashionable firmament, and many of the young men of P—— were enthusiastic in her praise.

"Do you know her? Have you seen her?" was the oft-repeated inquiry, and reached the ears of Mira Mapleton.

"Tell me of her. Is she fair?" she asked, with a look which said, "Of course none other can be beautiful!"

"Oh, no. Dark, bright, gloriously beautiful. I saw her at the opera with Mrs. Clifton. You know her—Arthur Graham's aunt. Rumor says the beauty is her adopted daughter. By-the-by, Graham is coming home soon."

Hope again grew in Mira's heart. A few weeks after, Mrs. Mapleton and Mira received cards of invitation to a reception given by Mrs. Clifton, who introduced her adopted daughter to her friends.

After an absence of nearly four years, Mrs. Clifton had returned to her home.

The night came when Mira should not only see the beauty, but again meet Arthur Graham.

Great care was bestowed on her toilet. And when Mrs. Mapleton surveyed her, she thought, Can any one be more beautiful?

It was a very brilliant assembly. Many eyes were eager to see the girl declared to be so very beautiful.

When Mrs. Mapleton and Mira approached to greet their hostess, she welcomed them, and turned to call the attention of her daughter, whose face was turned from them.

"My daughter, Mrs. and Miss Mapleton."

She turned. Report had spoken truly. A girl gloriously beautiful she was; a dark, bewitching creature. With perfect ease and grace she greeted them. And Mira felt her reign of beauty was over.

"Where have I seen her before?" was the inquiry that simultaneously escaped the lips of Mira and her aunt.

Arthur Graham came up just then, and after a cordial greeting from both ladies, Mira said:

"I am trying to think who Miss Clifton reminds me of."

"You will think it absurd, perhaps; but she reminds me much of your sister Mabel. Have you ever heard of her?"

"Never. But I don't see how you can think Miss Clifton like her. Yet there is a something that reminds me a little, a very little, of—"

"Whom?" asked her uncle, coming up.

"Mabel," answered Mira.

"To me she is like your mother, my sister. I seem to have gone back long years ago, as I look on that beautiful girl. Just so she looked." And his eyes grew moist, as he said: "I am going to be presented; I have not been. Come with me, Graham."

She saw them approaching. And stepping back within the recess of a bay-window, Miss Clifton awaited them. The eyes that sought hers were searching and tender. She could not resist them.

"Uncle! uncle!" she cried; and in an instant her arms were around his neck.

Soon all was explained, and he asked:

"But what has worked this great change in your looks, Mabel?"

"A change of atmosphere, uncle," she said, smiling.

"Ah, yes. I felt how it was, but I could not alter things. My interference would have made it worse," he said, solemnly.

"I thought you loved me a little, uncle," she answered.

Off he flew with the news, and soon returned, accompanied by his wife and Mira.

It was an embarrassed meeting on their part, but they got through it, and the party was separated, all but the uncle, who would linger near Mabel, and whispered:

"Where is the prince, Mabel?"

"Here, I hope," said Arthur, who came up in time to catch the words.

Uncle Mark chuckled merrily, and thought he had better move off then, as he believed he was *de trop*.

Long since, Mabel had grown to love, with all the ardor of her loving nature, the man whose kind heart had given light to her dark and dreary being.

Yes, he had sent his aunt to her. But she, worthy woman, insisted she must try and prove the girl first.

"You were sorely tried, Mabel," Arthur said, reverting to her first days after leaving her uncle's house; "but my aunt would have it so."

"I am glad she did, Arthur; I would not have gone, otherwise. I had learned to detest a home of wealth and fashion. I only wanted love."

"Will this home and all the love and devotion of its owner satisfy you, Mabel? Tell me now, darling; and remember, I shall not be satisfied with gratitude. You must never speak of that again. Only love, *your* love, I want."

"But Mira?" she murmured.

"Was never loved like you. Do you love me, Mabel?"

"I have, ever since the day you found me so unhappy."

"My darling! my own!" he whispered.

Mrs. Mapleton had the pleasure of saying, "My niece, Mrs. Arthur Graham," at last, but not just as she wished. She is again in quest of a suitable person to call her nephew. And often Uncle Mark says, "Mabel is a beauty. Truly love works wonders."

WHO WINS?

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

A PARTY of merry village maidens had gathered in their favorite resort, a beautiful shaded grove, and under the branches of a magnificent oak they sat weaving garlands of wild flowers.

"How dreadfully dull our village has grown! I declare, I'm positively pining away, almost to a skeleton. If something does not turn up to relieve this monotony, and produce a reaction—in a word, put new life into me—I shall die!" exclaimed Madge Hunter, a bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked girl of eighteen, weighing at least a hundred and forty pounds.

Madge's words and tragic manner brought forth a peal of laughter from her companions; but above their voices sounded another, a loud, full, hearty laugh. The girls turned quickly, and exclaimed simultaneously:

"Uncle Phil!"

The merriest old bachelor that ever lived was Uncle Phil Freeman. The girls all loved him, and his great delight was to make them happy. He had stolen quietly up to where they were, and heard Madge's declaration.

"Poor little Madge! Uncle Phil must see if he cannot bring back the roses to your cheeks, and tie you in some way to this world, or I'm fearful the first hard wind will blow you away. What can I do for you?

"Oh, Uncle Phil, Madge is just dying for a flirtation—that is it, I know. She has been behaving herself wonderfully well, really. Peyton Marsden has been away six months, and Madge has not attempted to break any poor fellow's heart yet," said one of the merry girls.

"A very good reason, she has had no chance. Indeed, it is positively a doleful story to relate, that there has neither been an engagement declared nor a marriage ceremony performed in our village for over a year. I declare, *I* shall leave here, and take up my abode, not in another world, but in some other place in this one, where I shall not stand such a chance of spending the rest of my days in single blessedness. Just think of a place that cannot boast of one marriageable young man! Horrors! I'm off now," exclaimed Kate Harlow.

"No, no; not just yet. I've hope for you. Wait, and hear the news," said Uncle Phil.

"Oh, I suppose you are going to tell us the *Arrow* has reached New York, and in a few days we shall have Peyton Marsden back, and the wedding soon after."

"No. That may all happen, but there is a chance for another wedding. Yours, may be. You know Marm Haven advertised for boarders. Well, she has got 'em—a young gentleman from Boston, with his invalid mother."

"How does any one know he is either young or single?" asked Kate.

"Why, if he was old and *double*, most likely some of the sick lady's grandchildren would be more apt to attend her. Don't you see?—And then hear his name—Paul Revere! Is that the name for an old fellow with a wife and a dozen young ones?"

"No, no. You are right, Uncle Phil. He is young, unmarried, handsome, and—"

"Rich? Yes, rich too; for Marm Haven read me the

letter, in which he said they wanted the very best accommodations, with the attendance of a servant for his mother. For both, a liberal price would be paid. They will remain, if agreeably situated, three months. Now, if one of you five girls do not succeed in catching Mr. Paul, I'll disown all of you."

"Five? No, Uncle Phil, there are only four. Madge is out of the question," said Kate.

"That's so. It is well for you she is. Now, who will catch him? Madge, as you are not interested, you shall express your opinion about the merits of each, and their respective chances. Now begin."

"Oh, Uncle Phil, I'm gaining flesh and strength already. No danger of my leaving the world now. When is he coming? This is just what I want! What fun we shall have—you and I—watching these girls! If he only knew what danger he was coming into! It requires a man of great courage to come into a village where there are four spinsters waiting to nab him. But then, as he knows nothing of this, we cannot accredit him with an overamount of bravery," said Madge.

"Well, well, begin. What say you of Kate's chance?" said Uncle Phil.

"About the best, I should think. Besides her own personal charms—Kate is really handsome, you know—there is her father's wealth, which may weigh very heavily in her favor."

"May be so," said Uncle Phil.

"Rose May's golden curls and laughing blue eyes will have a powerful effect on the young man, if he is a dark, gipsy-looking one, as I think he ought to be, with that name. Ada Kendall has her glorious brown eyes to make a charge with, and being supported with wit, intelligence, and her altogether charming manner, I should not wonder

if the young man yielded at once to her, particularly if he has any aspiration to secure a wife who will be a very brilliant star in the fashionable firmament."

"Very likely. You are rendering full justice to your companions' charms, Madge. Now last comes little Dora. What of her?"

"Dora! Let me think."

"Never mind, Madge, please. I will relieve you of a difficult task—that is, to find anything at all charming about me. I will sum up my possessions: plain-looking, a little short of positive ugliness; only moderately intelligent; poor, and almost friendless—"

"No, no, Dora, you must not talk so. You are not so brilliant, or strikingly handsome, as these other girls; therefore your chance is not quite so good. You, shy little bird, have to be known to be appreciated. You know Uncle Phil calls you his Daisy—for you always hide away, and never let folks have a chance of seeing how lovely you really are. Now, if I were the young gentleman in question, and in search of true happiness, I should certainly choose you; for every day I lived with you would reveal new beauties in your nature. You dear, loving, earnest, devoted little thing, you are just too good for any man—except Uncle Phil," said Madge, winding her arms about Dora Brownson.

"I cannot flatter myself any others will regard me as you, Madge, or as Uncle Phil does."

"Well, well, Madge and I just as lief others wouldn't. We would like to keep you from anybody that might win you away from us. Mine you are to be, any how, eventually, either in one relation or another, just which you choose—the old man's darling, daughter, or wife. Now, young ladies, you all understand Dora has a standing offer, which, however, will not in any way prevent her entering

the list against you in the coming contest," said Uncle Phil.

It was growing dark, and the girls separated for their respective homes. Three of them were already busy with thoughts and plans to captivate Paul Revere, who would arrive that day week, Uncle Phil had told them. Kate, Rose and Ada regarded each other with anxious, jealous hearts. They had no fears of Dora. Quite likely Paul Revere's eyes might never behold her. She seldom was seen at any gay resort, her time and care being all devoted to a very infirm grandmother, Dora's only living relative.

If the girls had, for an instant, thought of her as a rival, should the young gentleman see her, which might likely be brought about through Uncle Phil's agency, their minds were set entirely at ease. A few days after the evening they were together in the grove, Dora's grandmother grew very ill, and the devoted girl never left her side.

How busy the girls were during the next week, collecting and inspecting their stores of ribbons and laces! Dresses were remodelled; raven braids and golden ringlets arranged in numberless different ways, the fair owners endeavoring to decide which was the most becoming style. Although it would seem almost impossible they could find a spare moment from these important matters to get out of the house, Uncle Phil declared positively, and no one thought of ever doubting his word, that he had seen Rose, Kate and Ada, each at different hours, chatting with Marm Haven every day, during the week before the arrival of her boarders. And he had heard her say that she never knew before how very sweet and agreeable those girls were. She wondered how it was she had never found it out, as long as she had known them. But then somehow or other, she had never seen so much of them as lately.

How Uncle Phil chuckled when he told Madge, and she clapped her dimpled hands and laughed until she cried. The fun had commenced already.

The day for Paul Revere and his mother's arrival in the village at length came, and the three girls, by mutual consent, were at the station to catch a glimpse of them, or rather of Paul. They had very little thought about the sick mother, or cared whether she bore her journey well, or suffered from the fatigue. Marm Haven's bound boy, with the carry-all, a very uncomfortable vehicle, on which hours had been spent in washing and rubbing, to make it at all presentable, was in waiting. The girls saw the boy step up and speak to a young gentleman, who stood on the platform supporting on his arm a pale, elderly woman. Another moment and Tim was tugging at one of three trunks near by. There was no mistaking then that Paul Revere and his mother was before them—but, alas for the dark-eyed, magnificent fellow of their dreams—a pleasant, moderately good-looking young man, fair, with light hair and honest clear blue eyes. Nothing of the romantic or poetical about him.

Down went Rose's hopes. He would never take to her surely. They were too nearly alike. And she did not care to have him. She should retire from the field, and wait until the dark hero of her dreams should turn up.

Just as the last trunk was strapped on, and Paul Revere was descending with his mother to enter the carry-all, Squire Harlow's large, comfortable carriage drew up in front of the station, by chance of course, and Fred jumped down and said to his sister:

"Want to ride home, Kate?"

Kate did not; preferred walking. And then the kind-hearted, thoughtful Fred said:

"Then I'm going to offer to take that sick lady up to

Marm Haven's. That old concern Tim has there will jolt her to death."

Kate remarked, apparently very unconcerned:

"Just as you choose."

A few moments after, the girls saw Squire Harlow's carriage roll away with Paul Revere and his mother.

Now the mystery of the wild rattle-brain, Fred Harlow, becoming so suddenly kind and considerate, might be accounted for, with the knowledge of Fred's displaying a handsome pocket-book pretty well filled with stamps, and saying his Kate gave it to him.

The matrons of the village were very kind and attentive to Marm Haven's boarders—none more so than Mrs. Harlow. Almost every day her carriage was sent for Mrs. Revere to take a ride. Her kindness of course was fully appreciated by the son, who frequently called at the Squire's, to express his thanks. Kate's chances were admitted by all to be the very best. But Kate was by no means a favorite of Madge's; and as Rose had withdrawn from the contest, Madge determined to give affairs a little turn, and let Ada have a chance. Being engaged, as every one knew, Madge could act as she chose with regard to Paul Revere and his mother, without any one accusing her of interested motives. So she did the agreeable to Mrs. Revere, and quite won the old lady's heart. Nowhere in the village did she enjoy spending the afternoon so much as with Madge and her mother. Of course Paul always attended her, and there he met Ada. After which she shared his attention with Kate, who, growing uneasy, redoubled her efforts, and with very good effect. It was impossible for Paul to resist the combined force of the Squire, Mrs. Harlow, Fred and Kate, and so was in a fair way of being captured.

If left to his natural impulse, I think Ada would have

been the successful one. His admiration was very apparent.

Uncle Phil and Madge were often with Dora, endeavoring to cheer her and relieve as much as possible her sad duties. Her grandmother was sinking rapidly.

From these Dora heard of Paul and his mother. Uncle Phil had grown quite fond of the young man, and spoke with much warmth of his good qualities and devotion to his mother.

"He is too good for Kate. I think she is selfish, and—well, I don't believe she'll be any comfort to his mother. I wish, little girl, it was so that I could put you in the field against her. Well, may be something will turn up yet. There is many a slip between cup and lip," said Uncle Phil.

A few evenings after this remark was made, Mrs. Harlow, with Mrs. Revere in the carriage, was out for a drive, accompanied by Kate and Paul on horseback.

Never was Kate so charming, and most likely she would have completed her conquest, had not an unforeseen circumstance occurred, which brought to both Paul and his mother's knowledge a very disfiguring trait in Kate's character.

They had neared a pretty little cottage just out of the village, when they overtook and stopped to speak to Uncle Phil. The usual greeting had scarcely passed, when sounds of grief were heard through the open windows of the cottage. Another moment, and the door opened, and Dora ran out. Seeing Uncle Phil, who started toward her, she cried out:

"I'm alone now, Uncle Phil! Grandmother has left me."

Uncle Phil caught her in his arms, held her tenderly a moment, and then, seeing how quiet she was, he looked anxiously on her, and then exclaimed:

"Bless me! the child's dead herself, I believe!"

This exclamation brought Paul immediately to Dora's side, and he said:

"No, sir; not so bad as that. But she has fainted."

"Poor little dear! she has grown so weak, from confinement to the sick-room, she has no strength left to bear the grief of parting with her only relative," said Uncle Phil.

Kate was annoyed that Paul should be drawn from her side thus, and she saw how much he seemed interested in Dora. So, forgetting herself, she said:

"I do not see why she should go on so. I should think she would feel relieved of a great burden. Being released from humoring the whims of an exacting old woman is nothing to grieve about."

This heartless remark reached the ear of both mother and son. An anxious expression was in the former's eyes, as they sought Paul's. His plainly told that the spell was broken. He was free again. All Kate's power had suddenly passed away. He waited until Dora was fully restored to consciousness, and kindly cared for by the sympathizing neighbors who had gathered about her. During the ride home, Kate saw too plainly she had ceased to possess any charms for Paul Revere, and deeply she regretted the great mistake she had made.

That evening Uncle Phil called at Marm Haven's, to get her assistance in some kindness for Dora, and while there he told of the good girl's long and untiring devotion to her sick grandmother. Mrs. Revere was deeply interested, and declared her intention of calling with Marm Haven in the morning. So she did. And many times after, when Dora had been claimed by Uncle Phil, and taken to his home, where another old lady, Uncle Phil's sister, gladly welcomed her.

Paul always went with his mother, and sometimes

THE FATAL SECRET

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